

**FROM KANDAHAR:**

**'I'm going to kill them.  
That's my job.'**

P. 20

**LAWN  
RAGE**

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**REHEATING THE GRITS**

**Why Liberals need to  
party like it's 1960.  
By Peter C. Newman P. 18**

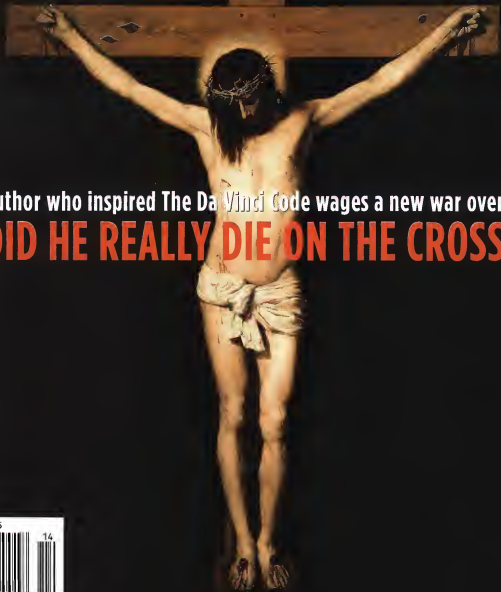
**CEO SPEAK:**

**How to  
lie like  
your boss  
P. 30**

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The author who inspired The Da Vinci Code wages a new war over Jesus

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# 'Mr. Playboy, Hugh Hefner, has indeed lived out a male fantasy—that of a 17-year-old. His condition is known as arrested development.'

who seek to eradicate any need for the use of animals in research by promoting safer and more humane research methodologies. Many of the experiments that have been conducted on animals in the name of science are unnecessary and unduly evasive!

Gillian Binkley, Bristol, England

## Hef at 80

Hugh Hefner is nearly 80 ("Elvis' Birthday Mr. Playboy," *Media*, March 20) in an creepy doghouse as *Nightfall* Jackson is, each in his own way. As my kids used to say—punk before Reagan-Eagles-Breitbart. Out



CHICAGO: At the 70th birthday bash in Las Vegas. Not just another hot babe fest

Imagine what sort of civilization we would have if all men emulated Hef, and all women tried to be Cosmo girls. He'd have indeed lived out a male fantasy—that of a 17-year-old. His condition is known as arrested development.

Dave W. Besser, Calgary

## The big-band king

Thank you for the profile of Marc Kenney by his grandson, Jason Kenney. Growing up on the 7th Concession of Vaughan Township (now the city of Vaughan, Ont.) from the 1950s and 60s, I liked down the road from Marc Kenney's Ranch, which was a popular dance hall for many, including my parents and their friends. It is interesting to note that, like his grandson, Marc was also political. He was a staunch supporter of Pierre Trudeau and an active Liberal. In 1968 he sought the federal nomination in the local riding but was defeated by Harvey Dornan.

Cathie Winsor, New Glasgow, N.S.

## No more Mr. Mastercraft

Congratulations Maclean's! Your year-end magazine has succeeded in getting the *Canoe* down the Grey line! "Who says? That piece of heavy lifting journalism written by the brilliant John Ivison ("What a tool," Oct. 31, 2005) really made me yawn popping the champagne cork in the office today. Political corruption, Canadian soldiers at war, nation-building...but Whose? Now getting people terminated, and taking a nice paycheck out of some poor family man's pocket—that, my friend, is good journalism.

James Kiaz, Toronto

Maybe President Tarz should have kept the poor guy employed—that maybe I could have found out what kind of pump and prime Senator SAGG got for prostate surgery. He-time in the local news sector to know. I say bring Tarz back, no matter how creepy. He is.

Paul Dolis, Calgary

## Remembering the Alamo

Mark Steyn ("We shall dighe them at the water cooler," March 20), quotes from Robert Coates's book *The 13 Strangers of Alamo*, saying, "The battle became a rallying cry—'Remember the Alamo!'"—and an inspired American force under Sam Houston finally defeated the Mexicans for good." However, Sam Houston commanded a force of people primarily from Mexico who considered themselves citizens of the Republic of Texas, not Americans. The Mexicans weren't defeated "for good" until the U.S. army, under Gen. Winfield Scott, took Mexico City in 1847, 11 years later.

Jacqueline Davis, San Antonio, Texas

## Sad, but so what?

As a mother of three daughters, I was moved to tears by your obituary of Shanaa Ann Staeke ("The Bird," March 20). She was obviously a very special young lady and I feel for her family, but the question must be asked, who profile her in *Maclean's*?

Catherine Fraser, Calgary

Surely there were more worthy people to profile than an American-Canadian client-entiret of all the top, South America, Africa, and this was the one you chose? Canada does not have all parts of the world. Let us have more of their stories and the countries they come from.

Miracle Robin, Montreal, Que.

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# A party, everyone's invited

When some Liberals see a race starting, they just have to run



PAUL HELLYER

Probably these our tribe. The press gallery's I can't speak for anyone else, but as all my time in Ottawa I forgot to mention that running the country is hard.

If enough people speak enough time calling Jean Chrétien a head, Paul Martin a pushover and Stephen Harper a robot, eventually the media will have to think anybody can do this job. Soon enough, everyone wants to. How else to explain the avalanche of candidates for the Liberal leadership?

(I'll be there, but as usually try to hold themselves to a single page. Usually we use up the field into two categories, each large enough that I will call them "Oldies" and "Youngies." First, there are people who seem to view the leadership as a reward for long service in the party, like a retirement allowance. Joe Fontana, Joe Volpe, Carolya Bennett, Dennis Gaudin, Ralph Goodale, John McGowan and many more. The second category: people who happened to notice the Liberal Party of Canada is in dire straits, by now the Liberal candidate would make a real difference. Ken Dryden, Scott Brison, Mark Irlin, Ashley MacIsaac, Michael Ignatieff.

It's not always clear when to stop a candidate. Ken Dryden, drive-by or make more gig? Hard to say. He's been a Liberal since 2004. In the current field, this makes him a veteran. He actually owns socks newer than his party card.

Not that Liberals like to hear that their champions might be imperfect. On Liberal blogs any mention the drive-by candidates—especially Brison and Ignatieff—is hotly answered with this ready response: it's un-Liberal to close the party of new members. And indeed it is so. The Liberal party has always welcomed new members, although history only it welcomed them in more every level positions. When I was a young man, the campaign Liberals had the coolest logo over a picture of Wilfrid Laurier wearing

Ray-Ban sunglasses—but they didn't actually mean that anyone with a pair of Ray-Bans could become Sir Wilfrid's successor right then and there.

But there is a reason for the multiplicity of candidates. Liberals thought they had a new thing in Paul Martin. They showed a lot of interest, including a follow by the name of Chrétien, to spend Martin's election. In the end more than 90 per cent of delegates voted for him. It didn't work out the way they expected



NEW LIBERALS need to join in the entry level.

**Ken Dryden is practically a party veteran. He's actually got socks newer than his membership card.**

No wonder Liberals are shaken by what was, in some ways, hardly a crushing defeat. They have a larger opposition caucus than any single party's in Canadian parliamentary history. They face a prominent rookie government. But in 2004 and 2005 they acted recklessly because they were certain they knew what it took to lead the country. Centrist, having disappointed, they have tried to fix a few mistakes.

If a life in the party and a distinguished record isn't enough to do as Martin, then maybe a vice-presidential commitment to Liberals will work better, or a coronation vote as shall we

as a post-ray, or both. And the factory thing is, all these people thinking "it could be me" are right. It could be them. The Liberals' rules for a leadership convention ensure that if a candidate has a decisive lead after the first ballot, then additional votes can come from a new Lyn McLeod and Delton McGowan race from the middle of underdoged fields to lead the Ontario Liberals in the 2010. In a world where anything can happen, you might as well try.

So it is hard to blame the candidates for their candidacies. Not that I'm not intrigued. I would, especially like to blame people who had their entire lives to enjoy the pleasure of learning a second language in all directions, and who are now seeking over verbatim as

though they were sitting and locally want to be faces of the younger ones to shift. They don't actually have to run for the leadership of every party they join, every time the re-use rate. There are people who have done that in Canada: Henry Prévost, Lorne Laxton, Sheila Copps, Paul Hellyer. They have not become heroes.

But circumstances having conspired to produce so many candidates, the burden of responsibility shifts to ordinary Liberals. Now is the time for the members of this sometimes great party to give their heads a shake. The task facing their new leader is difficult. Their adversary, Stephen Harper, is more formidable than they like to admit. Their Ontario base has crumbled. They must prove they're not just a party of looking at looking any action forward in Quebec—and the Liberals are not the party of national unity, what's left of their board anywhere in the country?

So if you're a Liberal, you really can't support a candidate because it "might be fun" or it would "bring youthful energy" or because the biography looks so sweet. You need to decide what actually matters. A serious leader has to know history and the country. He or she has to have thought hard about Quebec and the world. He or she must have a serious record of political involvement. Any claim that these goals for politics are simply profane.

There are serious potential candidates in this field. Bob Kim, Kathleen O'Brien, Ignatieff, Godfrey, Marlene Bonifacio, maybe Gerald Kennedy. You don't like any? No problem. I'm not a Liberal. If you're, make your own bet. But like it seriously: your party is in great danger. As the 10.

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Or about ideology. Paris is burning over a generation gap.

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And, 100% delicious.



**ANDREW BOSTON**

standing firm on the employment reforms that had caused the crisis. Meanwhile, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy refused to get drawn into the debate with his political rival, and his reluctance to commit any act of "low politics" annoyed the French journalists who had a clear mission in a department of crisis.

It was hard not to see this as an example of life imitating cliché. France is one of the most centralized states in the world, governed by remote bureaucratic agencies that are at times able to entirely ignore local opinion. This has given the French a rather distinct attitude toward the state, in which power

hire people who would be expensive or difficult to get rid of. Under the CFE, employers will be able to fire without cause anyone under 26 in their first two years of employment, the rationale being that a company will be more likely to give young people a chance if it knows it

It is as though die Wikipedians mutually decided that the entire economy would be organized along the principles that govern the free-market job market in North America. A free will-produced creative idea for today (middle-aged) readers, and many ensure their tomorrow's (mostly younger) readers. Even the conservative press is having a hard time swallowing. Most—the *Financial Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*—have written the obligatory editorials in support of the French government and denouncing the students. Yet even *The Economist* conceded that the GPE might have a number of potentially serious effects that would raise

Party has not received any corresponding bump in support. A number of commentators have cited this as evidence of the dim prospects for the protests, and denounced the students as little more than bourgeois rent seekers.

This misrepresents what the students are protesting. What is at issue is not the ideologically left versus right, it is young versus old. That is to say, the dispute is not over economics, but demographics. I interviewed a dozen or so students while I was in Paris, and every one of them furiously admitted that the French economy has serious structural issues. Of course they knew that the job market is too small, how could they not?

But their real difficulty is that behind the academic French job market lies a pernicious social inequality. At first it seems concerned, France's biggest problem is the avaricious elite that so jealously protects the institutions and privileges of seniority. Young graduates face a long wait before they can even think about winning a position of responsibility. There's virtually no guarantee that skill, talent, or hard work can bring more rapid advancement. "France hates young people," one student bitterly told me. Most of the rest declared that more or less right after graduation on the

'France hates young people,' says one. Many plan to move to New York, London, anywhere.

always seem to lying in the hands of the master, a group that specifically stresses change and accumulated discontent both over into the streets. These periodic protests amount to a ritualized, almost theatrical re-enactment of the original Revolution, the corrections are derived by the manner in which the police frequently disallow to prevent illegal actions

And ritualized theatre is how it seemed in the early days of the protests: I attended the first large demonstration after the trial/occupation, and it felt pretty profane/sacred. The crowd was not terribly worked up, though many of them had certainly dressed up: girls in long/loose shorts or short pants worn over tights; boys in sweats or tight asymmetrical pants. All in all, it felt like a fairly work-even encounter. By Jean Paul Gauthier

Things have become uglier since then. Two subsequent protests have grown larger and more violent, and a union worker is in a coma after apparently being trampled in a police charge. French unions and student groups have called for a national day of strikes on March 18.

At issue is the law enacting the CPE (called *la premier embauche*, or "first job contract"), which is designed to help alleviate France's 12 per cent unemployment rate among 15- to 24-year olds. It's widely accepted that France's rigid labor laws contribute to the problem by making companies reluctant to



**YOUNG AND ANGRY** Students protest in Paris against the new employment reforms.

approach the inequalities of the two-tier employment system. We must act on several fronts:

New York, or London, or anywhere they might discover twisted based on merit.

dy find clearly better (they turn 26, or—more likely—youth staying in school or not even bothering to look for work before that magic date). Meanwhile, young people working under those new “flexible” conditions will find almost impossible to get credit, to rent apartments, or otherwise take steps toward full engagement in adult society.

That's why March 2006 is nothing like May 1968. The late 1960s was a time of economic growth and opportunity in France. Flush with the optimism that came with economic security, the young left tended to demand the social and cultural freedoms that they felt were their by right. Today, amid an era once again failing against the establishment, but the protest comes from a position of great economic weakness and insecurity. They have given up trying to change the system instead of thinking on the right to dissent, they are much more likely for the chance to reform. ■







## DISCOVERY

## Warrior's tomb

Continental warriors in Cyprus have stumbled on a 4,100-year-old human skeleton, apparently that of an ancient warrior. What changes the discovery, archaeologists say, is that the warrior has been placed with armor from the eyes of a lion. "The style of the decoration is unique, not from an ancient point of view," says a Cypriot expert, "but the subject and the colours



DISCOVERY: Humanian color

used." The coffin is decorated with hues of red, blue and black and includes scenes of Ulysses

## Hunch engines

Computer scientists in Bosnia are seeking to marry human intuition with computer number processing in a bid to produce results that boost the efficiency of human intuition. The software would help users identify what they are looking for even while they're looking for it. It works by providing an initial with a "seed" based on an initial inquiry as well as a series of mutations. As the user conducts mutations, it also corrects mutations, much as the way human trial-and-error method based on hunches, only far more efficiently.

## Twitchees lions

Contrary to popular perceptions, lions do not twitch, scratch or fiddle with their hair. Such move-

## A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF... JOHN GODFREY

The 6th Liberal MP to decline a candidacy for the federal Liberal leadership, Godfrey came out swinging for environmental sustainability and social justice. He may fly away if his key issues such as Solinda Stremch or Michael Jackson if he decide to run when the campaign formally opens April 7. But last week, with Toronto Mayor Markie Hall and fellow activist Markie MacLean the only other declared candidates, Godfrey could take comfort in knowing that, to date, he's way in the lead.

## Cocoon fat farm

The massive changes a concept began through to become a reality in quite an equally massive amount of energy for the first time, scientists learned that while their ally rodents, as well as the honey bees, are humming by. "It appears as though the honey bees and the dark flies would be required," says Oregon Health & Science University's William Court. "But a great deal of metabolic activity is occurring."

## Little home wreckers

Female mice like to make with males whose ability to "test" have shown that males sprayed with a female's scent actually are more attractive. The efficacy was so pronounced that the females would choose a second male infused with perfume over a healthy, untreated bachelor.

## MORTALITY

**Poor hosts**  
Why have's it been longed to humans more readily than for? Scientists now say that the HIV virus has a difficult time adhering to membranes on the human nose, throat and upper respiratory tract. It takes repeated exposure to its target cells or other buds to get into the body. A study by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's virologist says. Only when it's there does it take hold.

## WILD KINGDOM

## Maxine and the hawk

Jennifer Rosen of Larchmont, N.Y., has a pet hawk named Maxine, and she's been recently when she heard a terrible noise. She saw a hawk, so she opened, trying to drag the one-lunged dog down off the perch to carry her off. Maxine broke five of her claws and hid in the house. Wildlife experts say that hawk attacks on people are very rare, and that the best possible mistake Maxine for a rabbit.

be used for medicines that treat cardiovascular diseases



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DISCOVERY: The heavy demands of the hawk have the fat of catfishes



## THE WEEK AHEAD... IRAN, ABRAHAM AND A HEROINE'S RETURN

The United Nations Security Council debates Iran's nuclear program. Former Washington, D.C. lobbyist Jack Abramoff, who pleaded guilty in January to conspiracy, an evasion and wire fraud, will be sentenced. And speed racing phenom son Cindy Klassen returns home to Winnipeg for the first time since winning five medals at the Olympics. She is scheduled to appear at what is seen to be a tumultuously jubilant Manitoba Moose hockey game.

warning to partly make and pack down cover, especially, the powdered the emergency of the pack, making it dangerously unstable.

## Daytime rot

Older adults who prefer soap operas and that shows in their daytime television watching tend to score lower on mental tests. A study of 210 older women not suffering from dementia who had such scores found they tended to score lower on memory tests, attention and mental agility than those preferring other types of shows, such as news programs.

## KIDS TODAY

## The Goths are okay

They might look deadly, but the pulled monkey, black hair, jewelry and pinching that are the trademarks of Goths do not mean your children are on the way to a bad end. A study by the University of Sussex in England has concluded that, unlike parents, Goths grow up to be happy, jobless and other professionals. Researcher says the kids in many a rebellious subculture is an inherent middle class life.

## Red Bull and booze

Club goers who mix booze with Red Bull or other "energy drinks" report a higher sense of being in control and avoiding the dangers that come from inhaling too much fat. But French researchers warn this is a risky business, they say a significant potential danger, drinking energy drinks on full people into overestimating their ability to drive after drinking.

## MONEY

## Bags of money

The worldwide airline industry could save US\$2.5 billion a year if it stopped losing people's baggage. Last year, according to airline bags

were absent. Although it has a 94 per cent recovery rate of lost luggage, the industry needs an administrative cost, as well as the cost of reimbursing passengers for the 340,000 bags that never get found.

## Chopsticks fax

With \$15 billion disposable chopsticks and every year, forests and bamboo stands shrinking, the Chinese government last week introduced a five per cent tax on the using chopsticks. The move is part of a package of conservation measures meant to curb environmental waste and reduce in-

together, 11 per cent up to 100 million, and seven per cent up to 100 million.

## Thais divided

Thais in Thailand disagree over whether the kingdom should go to the polls next month, following escalating demonstrations against Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. A poll found that 39.5 per cent want an election postponed, while 52.2 per cent disagree. The conservative government from a decision by the Shinawatra family to sell their stake in a television network in US\$1.8 billion. Critics have charged the



DISCOVERY: Allegations of corruption have no consensus in elections

sale placed strategic voters in foreign hands, but there have also been allegations of official corruption, and mismanagement of the country's youth.

## IN OTHER NEWS

## Lion's share

Three dentists, South African women, whose father wrote the pop hit The Lion Sleeps Tonight, have won a six-year court battle. For royalties. The award gives the sisters 25 per cent of royalties paid, present and future—amounting into the millions—for a song their father recorded in 1970, in speed by his childhood friends

of painting cattle from naturalistic life. In the 1950s, when South African blacks were gaining rights, Solomon Linda sold his song for less than \$1.

## Tank's love

Think *Tank* has seen his prison sentence extended for failing to appear in court. Why didn't he appear? Because his brother, Tyrone Carter, was playing for the Pittsburgh Steelers in the Super Bowl and Tyrone encouraged *Tank* to watch. As a result of missing his date with jail for diving with a revoked license, *Tank*'s sentence has been added six months to his five years. "Even knowing what I knew now, I would do it again," *Tank* said.

## IN PASSING

Lemuel Carson, a.k.a. Professor X, 44, rap musician. Legend of the '80s group X-Clan, he became best known for his recordings of *Public Enemy* and *Five G's* (1990). He died of spinal meningitis.

Bernard Lacombe, 76, dentist who turned his family's second-handmade shirts into a global clothing empire. Lacombe took a company founded by his father and expanded it into women's wear and accessories, making it one of the most recognized labels on earth. *ET*



LACOMBE: Crocodile empire





# MIRACLE IN KINGSTON

Liberals have reinvented themselves before. Just look at 1960.

**BY PETER C. HUNMAN** When Ashley Meade came out of the closet to declare that he was not a traditional liberal, his fellow liberals postmodernized his revelation, the Liberal leadership committee took on his new colors. With 21,000 votes and seven cabinet ministers, it has become a rite for the short story. Meade, explained to the *Halifax Daily News* he was running to save national unity and to "end the continuous mockery of the Liberal party like had a point. Meade is exactly what the Liberal party needs. His mock candidacy doesn't bring the Bulling Goat to the scene, nothing will.

How could they—these wayward geniuses who not so long ago boasted of being Canada's natural governing party—how could they so quickly have refuted their historic political movement to providing fodder for the Bush-McCain's voters, and not much that? The answer: the party owes the people to give us an act together by choosing a leader who represents a new generation with new ideas. A Grit version of Stephen Harper who one day the political center, not a tactic but a reflection of his or her personal values.

If you will, it is the most qualified candidates—Frank McKenna, Allan Rock, John Manley and Brian Tobin—opted out early. Their dream CM reflected aggressive past accomplishments instead of future possibilities.

Most of the other likely contenders are self-declared non-competitors who have heard the Clinton call to lead the party out of its self-imposed wilderness in their wilderness, it was an echo of their own voices. One of the most accomplished in Parliament, Don, who had led the Clarity Act, which ended Jean Chrétien's brightest legacy (This, of course, qualified Don for being damaged by Paul Martin.) Don is the most of Canadian politicians in an original shadow with the balls to run ideas into action. An equally unexpected presence is Ashley Meade, the most charismatic liberal since Pierre Trudeau. His main voters belief is not to be his absence from Canada for the past 10 years. Maybe. But I can't imagine any higher recommendation, since it means he bears responsibility for the free will that has placed Canadian politicians on the lowest rung of public respect. The path to Martin's resignation has left the Liberals with nothing much to accept personal. Exploring losses with it, I agree with it.

Apart from injured leadership, the party

desperately requires policies that will establish Canada as a 21st-century player, despite the reluctance to abandon our 19th-century mentality. Whenever policies are debated, the word "Vanguard" is the magic word. Caught in a similar quagmire where John the fishbowl decisively defeated the Grits in 1998, leader Lester Pearson convened the Study Conference on National Problems at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., on Sept. 6-10, 1960.

I was there and witnessed the magical rebirth of a consensus movement. Billed as a

They included Keith Davey, who as normal director introduced the modern Liberal party. Maurice Sauvé, who became a pivotal reformer of the Quebec wing and whose wife, Jeanne, became governor general, Claude Morin, who chaired the Lange government's social security platform and eventually was both an advisor to René Lévesque and an opponent to the RCMP, and Richard C. O'Brien, who became the most credible spokesman for both Pearson and Trudeau. Kingston's most influential presence was the federally independent Jean Marchand, who eventually led Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier into the Liberal fold. Peter Turner gave an inspiring speech on legal aid, and later succeeded Trudeau.

I recall most vividly the impact of the remarkable delivery of Tom Kent, a former editor at *Maclean's* and former editor of the *Windsor Free Press*. His take on the philosophy of social security convinced many of the radical ideas that became the Liberals' most progressive initiatives. News highlights, Kent remained the party's social conscience, thundering in the neo-con backlash. His economic equivalent was Maurice Lamontagne, a worldly figure who spoke with the offhand brilliance of a John Maynard Keynes or John Kenneth Galbraith.

What I found most memorable about Kingston were not the innovative ideas and jaw-dropping leaps of the speakers, but the mood of self-consideration that pervaded that epic gathering. The delegates, however, for they may have strayed from their ideas, behaved with good reason that they had made Canada what it had become. The good things and the bad things were exactly their doing. They had sold it to the Americans (in order to remove it from the British), but also put in to practice their ideal of a humane and relatively pragmatic society. They were all there, the big and small liberals, proponents of every minor. It was their ordered faith in the power of intellect and goodwill that was to inspire an admirable result in the reestablishment of a nation that held them together and allowed them to transform the country.

For me, the highlight was the closing address by Frank Underhill, the party's most dazzling political wit. He spoke of his dedication to the cause with the effusive emotion of a great classical scholar—then delivered this ringing valedictory: "At times," he confessed about visiting Liberal, "I have had to hold my nose while marking the ballot." ■



**REMEMBER** Davey (center photo) was one of the new voters who emerged at the conference.

new partisan assembly of "liberal-minded" Canadians, the meeting was organized by Mitchell Sharp, then a key Liberal executive and later cabinet minister. The conference's policies steered the party to the left, away from its preoccupation with the postwar national period. But the gathering's main endorsement was the newwave Liberals it provided to take over the command of the party in the 1960s. (Of the conference's 116 delegates, 48 later delivered cabinet government appointments.)



**MUSLIM-HATING SEXPOT SAYS SHE'S NOT CRAZY**  
"I am not crazy. I am pleading with you. This will be my last visit to Canada before I die."—former sexpot Brigitte Bako, 75, in Ottawa where she pleaded for an end to the war. Her remarks may have resonated more than the words she made in previous years. Such as when she branded homosexual "Mongolian hordes," condemned interracial marriages, and warned that France was being "infected" by "Islamic terrorism." ■

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## AFGHAN AUTHORITIES ARE TRYING TO RID KABUL OF ITS SEEDY REPUTATION BY RE-INJECTING ISLAM INTO THIS CITY OF SIN EXTREME MAKEOVER

**BY ADAM B. KARIM** Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Kabul has transformed from a seamy haven of religion to a city of sin. The pre-9/11 red light district of the Muslim world, "it's getting out of hand," says Saad Jorashad, a 26-year-old judge in Afghanistan's fledgling criminal courts. "Afghans were finding out condoms on the streets and foreign men were walking around in the open with prostitutes." So now, four years after Kabul's theological loss, curfew was passed openly by the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, the capital is warring on the brink of a new revolution, as authorities try to reinvent a crackpot regime.

But making over this new City of Sin is proving to be a real challenge. "Alcohol and prostitution are illegal in the Afghan constitution," says Abdul Jabbar Sabir, a legal adviser to the Ministry of the Interior. "But what happens inside private homes is none of our business." And the occasionally unaided lives of foreign contractors, and agency workers and diplomats in Kabul has remained only occasionally scandalous. Many of Kabul's trendy restaurants, clustered around the cap-



**WESTERN STYLE VIBE** Even though booze, illegal, prostitution is rampant and the breeze is free blowing in the nation's capital

commissary in the Sher-e-Nasr and Mohr Akbar Khwa districts, openly sell alcohol to foreigners and Afghans alike.

Meanwhile, prostitution, considered to be un-Islamic by the Taliban, is booming in a fast-growing industry. During the last few years, brothels have popped up all over the city. Russian brothels are the exclusive domain of Afghanistan's expat community—they are far too expensive for domestic buyers. But some Chinese brothels, which are much cheaper, have opened their doors to Afghans. "It's the Afghans who are the problem," says one British national who admits to frequenting brothels on a regular basis. "If the houses opened only to the foreigners, the revolution would never have happened." In early February, police rounded up a dozen of Chinese sex workers, who, if not for the intervention of the International Organization for Migration, would have been driven to jail. Instead, they were taken to a safe house before being sent back to China. "Thanks for a fact," says the British national. "The brothels the police raided were the ones serving Afghans."

In Kabul, considered one of the safest places in Afghanistan only a year ago, the backlash against what is perceived as Western-inspired vices has, at least in part, contributed to a recent uptick against foreigners. Due to the subsequent tightening of security measures, UN staff are now constrained to their cars and guest houses, barred from walking the streets and doped with a 9p an-

curfew. Kabul is on a knife edge, with government officials struggling to strike a balance between the open-door policies intended to make Westerners feel welcome and the ethos of a society that for years lived according to the strictures of the conservative Taliban.

Many worry that Kabul's seedy reputation may anger people in other parts of Afghanistan and further fuel the growing insurgency currently under way. The Taliban has promised a deadly spring offensive against foreign military forces in Afghanistan and the country's Western-backed government. That would be bad news for NATO troops—including Canadians, who recently expanded their mission into the western part of the country where the insurgency is considered to be the most active. "That's partly why the cracks down is happening now," explains Abdul Fatah Noori, owner at the Sher-e-Nasr district. "Because of the current incidents and other reports about the media, the police were worried about the safety of foreigners, that they could be the targets of violence. So rather than wait for something to happen, they've taken action."



**CRACKDOWN** Curfew has been imposed on foreigners in Kabul as violence increases

Another factor is that the new Afghan parliament is under a great deal of pressure to assert its authority. Cleaning up Kabul's image and putting the Islamic back into the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is one of the government's top priorities. "There are many former mujahideen living in the parliament," says Noori. "These are former fighters, a few former Taliban, but mostly those who fought the Russians. They feel very strongly about Islam. They are worried Afghans are being corrupted by the foreign influence."

Kabul's City Hall appears to be over, but the damage may already be done. ■



**PROTEST** AMLO, as he is known, has compared himself to Jesus and rallied against big business

## Viva Obrador!

Mexico looks to be next in line to elect a socialist president

**BY GUARDIAN VISITOR** This week, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and U.S. President George W. Bush are flying to the Mexican town of Cancun to meet with their Mexican counterparts, Vicente Fox. Although the North American leaders' summit will touch on important issues facing the three countries—everything from drug cartels to immigration—it is still going to be the way of the North American Free Trade Agreement, energy, and the potential economic effects of a disease pandemic—the most recent scandal for the future stability of the region will likely not be on any of their agendas.

Unofficially, some policy makers have been worried for months about what new terms to be the likely outcome of Mexico's presidential election this summer. After six years of steady economic growth under the conservative Fox, what will become of Mexico if it is ruled by the current left-leaning, leftist populist who seems to have an anathema to the current Fox's policies? Canada and the United States?

It's a question many are now asking. Recent polls have shown that Andrés Manuel López Obrador, 51, the waterworks former mayor of Mexico City who has compared himself to Jesus Christ and rallied against the enemies of big business, seems poised to become the next president when Mexicans go to the polls on July 1. The left-wing widower and father of three, who began his political career campaigning for the rights of the country's in-

formalized indigenous populations, is wildly popular with Mexico's poor. Polls put him at least 16 percentage points ahead of his closest rivals, Felipe Calderón of Fox's National Action Party, and Roberto Maduro of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI.

In July speeches, López Obrador, who is known by his initials AMLO and heads the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), has promised to overturn government policies, including his own if he becomes president. He has promised to invest in health care, infrastructure, food subsidies for the elderly, free education through college, and aid for single mothers and the disabled. A fierce Mexican nationalist, AMLO has also indicated that he wants to renegotiate the free trade agreements to protect farmers and other workers who have been displaced since NAFTA came into effect in 1994.

His opponents worry that he plans to wall off and up isolating Mexico on the world stage, and fuel inflation. AMLO, they fear, will reinvent their country as a state-controlled economy—something Fox sought to dismantle when he broke the 1985 71-year-old stronghold on Mexican politics in 2000.

AMLO, himself a former member of the PRI, rarely loses an opportunity to rail against the rich. In a recent exchange with Roberto Hernández, one of Mexico's wealthiest bankers, who said once he made his fortune by the law, AMLO replied, "I don't know if it was legal or not, but what would it be to obtain profits of that size and at that pay rates, is immoral and offends the people." Such outbursts have led to comparisons with Venezuela's socialist Hugo Chávez. But AMLO shrugs off any similarities. "There is an attempt to compar-

in," he said. "I've never met Hugo Chávez, or spoken with him on the telephone. We are distant."

His aides are keen to make this clear to Mexico's most important trading partners, Canada and the U.S. Last year, to ease corporate American fears that AMLO was going to become yet another radical populist in a region where politics are increasingly moving to the left, his aide Manuel Camacho Solís told a group of Wall Street investors that AMLO is a pragmatist at heart. "We will not do crazy things in terms of the economy," Camacho Solís said in New York, adding that AMLO

## IN SPEECHES, HE HAS PROMISED TO CUT GOVERNMENT SALARIES, INCLUDING HIS OWN, FOR BETTER HEALTH CARE

had already taken many from his promise to organize NAFTA. "But Wall Street is not going to have a president who does everything it wants, because if that were the case, the president would not be able to govern."

AMLO may work his crowds of anxious leftist supporters like old-style Latin American populist, but many analysts predict that if he does become Mexico's next president, he will follow in the footsteps of Luis Luján Laula de la Cruz, Brazil's leftist leader. Despite their rhetoric on the campaign trail, which he summed up as "change and shared growth with the Brazilian country," Laula, elected in 2002, has followed in the free-market reforms of his country's conservative predecessor.

"I think he [AMLO] will be closer to a Laula figure," says Eduardo del Busto, a veteran foreign diplomat and Latin America analyst who is executive director at the Canadian Foundation for the Americas, an Ottawa-based think tank. "Should AMLO observe what he will not do, he will not do the power of a Chávez. A possible 1980 government would not likely have such an uneasy majority in congress, so he would have to forge alliances with the opposition." Moreover, unlike Venezuela, the Mexican economy is not badly shaken by a petroleum sector, says del Busto. Mexico has a rich world economy base and a vibrant private sector, which will continue to flourish no matter who wins elections in July, he notes.

There has been some public hand wringing on conservative circles in the U.S. and Canada over the possible results of the election and the wider tendency of leftist governments throughout Latin America. In Ottawa, six veteran diplomats who did not run to be re-elected, "the impression was that is that [AMLO] is leaning to the left." The presidential campaign comes to a close when Canada has promised to make Mexico a more important focus for bilateral cooperation, focusing on foreign policy initiatives beyond economic ones and NAFTA, which



WALK WITH THE LEFT? The U.S. hopes AMLO will be more like Laula (right), not like Chavez.

continues to be an unpopular issue among many Mexicans. Canada is Mexico's second largest export market, and Mexico is the fifth biggest buyer of Canadian export goods.

Major in the Bush administration, at least, are beginning to realize that an AMLO victory may make little difference in their relationship with Mexico. "My expectation is that he will not be as radical as people expect because he is essentially a conservative in Washington today," says Roger Noriega, a veteran fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington. Until last year, Noriega was assistant secretary of state for western hemisphere affairs (Canada and Latin America) in the Bush administration.

"Assuming he [AMLO] does not espouse a Christian rhetoric, my guess is the U.S. government will make cordial efforts to keep relations as an even keel," Noriega says.

WIKI A (ALL) Mexico's poor have been



Washington has made similar efforts to maintain a strong relationship with Laula, leader of the biggest economy in Latin America, and even with Evo Morales, the left-wing populist recently elected in Bolivia (U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with Morales in Chile earlier this month). For his part, AMLO is expected to "do his damndest" to reassure the United States, Noriega points out. "AMLO will undoubtedly try to establish deeper relationships with South America," says del Busto. "But he understands that the U.S. is his immediate neighbor, and that the ultimate way Mexico's destiny is linked to North American realities."

A major of Mexico City since 1990 (he left the post in order to campaign for the presidency), AMLO, who has weakened a handful of monopolistic companies statewide, has already demonstrated his capacity for pragmatism. While he has in a modest agreement and driven a second business, he has not walked away from working with the super-rich. When city hall wanted to restore some of the city's most historic neighborhoods, AMLO called on Carlos Slim, a Mexican tycoon and one of the world's richest men, to help him. He still maintains a close relationship with Slim, despite their polarized differences.

"They can accuse me of corrupt things, but they can't accuse me of corruption," AMLO is fond of repeating in his campaign speeches. And although he has demonstrated a Western-style ability to forge strong alliances, he claims he has not compromised his principles. "I will never bow to the Mexican people," AMLO has said. Whether their angry rhetoric or reality should become clear if he becomes Mexico's new leader in July.

WIKI John Gaudin on Ottawa and Laula Ch. Source in Washington



Censure Resolution Against Pres. Bush for NSA Surveillance

CSPAN 2 U.S. Senate

## Turning on their own

### A Democrat's move to censure Bush sparks anger—from other Democrats

BY LISA CH. HANNAH • Russ Feingold is a

senior pitching three-term Democratic senator from Wisconsin, a former Rhodes Scholar and anti-terrorism crusader whose chance of running for president was written off last year after he divorced his number one. But his sudden jump for George W. Bush's signature bill to "censure" the President is sparking calls of traitor and re-emerging liberal Democrat in a way not seen since the burning of the Howard Dean bellies.

Feingold, 55, claims Bush has crossed "the style line" of "high-tyranny and circle-revolution" by his sweeping vetoes on American "international justice" and "civil and constitutional" warfare, despite a law requiring one. Bush says he has the authority to release "censure" legislation groups "as a matter of order in the Senate." Many experts say he's wrong, Feingold wants a reckoning.

The censure bill has made Feingold the runaway favorite Democratic candidate on liberal blogs, and websites have been popping up pressing him to run. MoveOn.org—the powerful group originally created, not only, to censor Bill Clinton and then urge the country to "move on" past his impeachments—has endorsed his move, as has his late night comedian Jay Leno. And he has had wide appeal. A recent national poll by New Hampshire-based American Research Group showed that more American voters support censuring the President over spying, 48 percent, than oppose it, 49 percent. "There is a lot of support for it," says Dick

Bennett, president of the non-partisan polling group, who notes that at 57 per cent approval, "Bush is above us low as he can go."

Of course, the censure bill is purely symbolic; it would never pass a Republican-controlled Senate, and even if it did, it has no legal effect. It's mostly a formal challenge, one that's been used against a president only once before, in 1948 against Andrew Jackson. The Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing on it this week, but so far, Feingold's biggest obstacle as Democrats—particularly those up for re-election to the House and Senate in November. Only two of Feingold's fellow Democrats had co-sponsored the bill as often used, and most haven't even taken it to the Senate and they need more information, while others stepped in to show "his intention" to use the bill as a political maneuver to secure re-election in November, says Feingold. John Ashcroft is a senator from Missouri who has also been a long-time critic of high government spending—going so far as to return his government raises in the U.S. Treasury.

His concern: he may raise his profile, but it may also play into Republican talking points that Democrats criticize the President on national security without offering alternative plans. "American voters want a vision of hope for the future," says pollster Bennett. "Is talking about how bad Bush is may open the door, but you've got to give them something that's."



### SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO: IT'S JUST A TV SHOW

The referendum last week withdrew from the 21st General Assembly of the Serbian and Montenegrin people. The two ethnic groups failed to agree on who should represent them. Within a Montenegrin key held over the last election, recently, they were forced by a Serbian audience and pulled with borders. Serbia changed Montenegrin had rejected the vote. Last week's move was a first in 60 years. Montenegro held an independent referendum the day after the European election.

non-presidential years, according to Subota, and it always falls into for one party. This year, Democrats are running in Republican-controlled with Bush and the Iraq war to stop them. The possibility of winning an election in the polls is happened before in the mid-term election of 1996, Republicans won despite the Clinton war scandal because of a Democratic backlash against their tactics.

Already, GOP television ads are publicizing his move and urging voters to "Call Russ Feingold and ask him why he's come forward in censuring the President thus protecting our freedoms." For his part, Bush has accused Feingold of "no real leadership."

Feingold, meanwhile, is starting to swing back at his party. "Why would people cover at a time when the President's numbers are so low?" he asked at a press conference. "There is a tendency in my party to be afraid of taking a strong stand and asking for a bill that just shows us to be weak under their party that's ready to give the country."

How far could tough talk take Feingold? Like Dean, he could distrust liberals but when as candidates. In August, Feingold became the first senator to call for a specific date for U.S. troops to withdraw from Iraq. He was the only member of the Senate to vote against the Patriot Act in the weeks following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. But Feingold, a Republican, not a conservative. During Clinton's impeachment trial, he broke ranks with his party and voted to bar the evidence against the president. In September, he voted to confirm Bush's judicial nominees, and Howard W. Law, a liberal, says he is not as close as the U.S. Supreme Court, and he was the only Democrat on that judiciary committee to vote against a confirmation. John Ashcroft is a senator from Missouri who has also been a long-time critic of high government spending—going so far as to return his government raises in the U.S. Treasury.

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**WARNING:** Once the sole domain of the post-apocalyptic literati, *post-apocalyptic* has become a

## LAST RESORT LOANS

### Unregulated and illegal, payday lenders come under fire

**COLIN CAMPBELL:** A few steps from the corner of the country's wealthiest shopping district, a place in midtown Toronto where diamond sellers rub shoulders with high-fashion retailers, is an unlikeliest storefront: a Moose Man. Just across the street, a similar store, Cash Money, A Better Brother than the block, a friend, then a fourth, each advertising loans for anyone in need of fast cash. The stores, with their screaming yellow signs, are 24-hour a day buyers of the fine growing supply of cash currency, attracted to be worth as billions a year. Once thought to be for dunces on their back steps, paid by money lenders, specializing in small, unsecured loans, these private lenders are now, across five years, paying nothing over-kind of interest, but a 10% fee, for the use of their money. They are the last of the old-fashioned, every social strata. There is no one paying back stores the Department of Finance building Ottawa—an example not only of their persistence but of the breakdown of an important

the payday-lending industry maintains such rates merely cover the cost of offering short-term, unsecured loans (with a modest profit of about 15 percent), many say it's loansharking in the extreme. And chartered banks have lapsed in area's length of distance from the industry, despite its rapid growth and profits.

Now, after a decade of unbridled expansion that saw the industry grow from a handful of studios to over 1,500, the industry has come under scrutiny in recent months. So-called clean action lawsuits have been launched at aggressive payday companies. In March, the Supreme Court decided an effort by Dollar Financial Corp., the large U.S. company that owns Money Mail, to halt its loans. Two weeks ago, Mainframe Financial, Minnesota's Gang Sellsinger introduced legislation to boost the industry and give the provision power to set its own interest rates in order to clamp down on what he called "unconscionable practices." The legislation requires Outright approval, but in an move Sellsinger told federal Justice Minister Vx. West is amenable to the idea.

The move could end five years of federal-provincial wrangling over the issue. Efforts to regulate the industry have been complicated by the fact that the federal government oversees interest rates, while the provinces oversee consumer affairs. As a result, dispute day loan question has become what Young calls "a game of federal provincial hot potato." "It's an issue in many jurisdictions," says Sullivan. "But we've decided to act on it."

Adding to the onslaught against payday companies, earlier this year a Winnipeg police laid the first criminal charges in Canada against a payday lender, payday company Payday Canada Inc., for criminal interest rates. Lead investigator Det. Sgt. Len Terhulst said police have not ruled out further charges, but are watching what happens with the proposed new law. "The industry is operating illegally," he says. "There's absolutely no regulation, except a national umbrella organization. To call them self-governing would be an understatement."

Terhulst is not referring to the Canadian Payday Lender Association, set up by the industry

**WINNIPEG POLICE LAID CANADA'S  
FIRST CHARGES AGAINST A COMPANY  
FOR CRIMINAL INTEREST RATES**

in 2004 to try to clean up its reputation. "The emergence of the industry over the last decade has caught a lot of people by surprise," says Bob Whitlow, the president of the group, which represents 140 payday stores and 35 companies.

Many people fail to understand the real cost of providing a small, short-term loan. Whichever way, if a company issued \$100,000 in loans over five days and charged a mere 1%, the annual rate would still be 100% per year, he says.

Such a conversion is unfair, he says, much like asking a hotel to advertise the cost of a room for a year rather than just one night. "Technically, what they're doing is providing the linear interest rate is 60 percent, but they've capped that on fire and costs to provide that product and cover their costs," he says. This is in conflict with the Criminal Code, he contends, because the law makes no distinction between fire and interest. "That's where we're calling on government to amend that federal law," says Whitham.

One of the group's biggest controversies was to outlaw "followers," interns and chaperones added to unpaid loans, effectively creating a snowballing loan difficult to pay off. Tullius let slip such restrictions don't go far enough. "They say they don't do rollovers because that's against their industry ethics, but they loan you the money to pay off your first loan."

Traditional banks, meanwhile, have been criticized for neglecting the segment of the population that uses payday companies, by closing branches in low-income areas and not offering viable alternatives. Dollar Financial Corp., for example, describes itself as a company "serving underserved consumers." "That product generally isn't available from credit unions and banks, but consumers from time to time do need this service," says Whitehead. Some critics don't see credit finan-



**COREY AREA** Even the industry says it's time for government to step in with regulations.

Ironically, those who use payday companies have bank accounts—they're unable to get a loan, along with a pay stub. Banks also show that payday stores are secretly luring those to banks, a further sign they're offering something banks do not. Canada thanks any day they provide services like [www20.cba.ca/consumer/and/credit/credit.htm](http://www20.cba.ca/consumer/and/credit/credit.htm).

which serve the same purpose as payday loans. But they can't explain why a 5 million Canadian loan company can't pay interest on its loans. "If you have the answer we would have you right away," Jacques Habert, a director of the Canadian Business Association, told a Senate hearing looking into payday loan companies last year.

Given the risky nature of uncontrolled industries in a free society that banks, and even credit unions, are reluctant to offer them. "Florida has a responsibility to take care of itself and its depositors and that children is taken care of responsibly," the CBA wrote in a submission to the Senate. "BNA, however, has a long history of providing a safe place for people to put their money, and the money people place there funds loans from banks and other money-fund institutions, some of which the industry calls the 'banker model'."

Legislation like Manatt's is successful or it otherwise eventually stops and intrudes on one, banks and credit unions are not needed to enter the payday territory argues Scott. The industry lobby, on the other hand, hopes legislation will help or already hinder industry power. Either way, the two groups are being seriously tested in the coming months as the industry negotiates it's deal with lawmakers.

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# MAKING SENSE OF BUSINESS BLUSTER

**A new book cuts the spin, and reveals what CEOs are really saying**

**BY KATHERINE MACLEOD** • In their last full letter to Enron shareholders before the company's collapse, chairman Kenneth Lay and CEO Jeffrey Skilling used the words "strong" and "large," or their derivatives, five times. Included in Enron's annual report for 2001, the letter runs almost 1,500 words, and describes a growing, preeminent enterprise anxious to the rigors of the marketplace, including possible downturn in the economy. Using the language of spin, the letter seems that the same point contained in 2000's "one decade the competitor"—in 16 points, no less—and that with its "size, experience and skills," it would overcome any future impediments. Comparing Enron's U.S. oilfield output, the leaders promise shareholders that the company is "best focused" on earnings per share. For within nine months, to the authors of a note to be released back on the language of CEOs point out, Enron was broke,

with no earnings per share and nothing in its arsenal to keep a lid of bankruptcy.

The Enron letter is a perfect example of "co-optation to the point of outright lying," says Russell Craig, an accounting professor at Babson College and an American National University, currently based in Toronto. It's co-written, with Joel Auerick, professor at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, of *CEO Speak: The Language of Corporate Leadership*. The Enron letter offers a "harvest of blarney, bluster, and business-speak hodgepodge," Auerick and Craig say. What's more, the letter pre-

sents insight into the way Lay and Skilling view the world—and fear with misleads, the two leaders emerge as egotistical and full of blarney that the authors question whether they were "affected by delusional psychosis."

The Enron letter contains are just two examined by the co-writing professors. Auerick and Craig look at the written words of a range of U.S. and Canadian CEOs, in-

cluding Jack Welch, Secretary of General Electric, Bill Gates of Microsoft, and John Roth, who led Nortel as its stock price peaked and then crashed into a free fall. The book introduces a novel approach to business analysis, as Auerick and Craig dissect the letters, speeches and policy statements of CEOs. Line by line, they sift through public documents, in-house newsletters and annual reports to show how corporate leadership portray not only their companies, but also themselves. And they find that much of the language of CEOs is rife with misrepresentation, delusion, and even deceit. "What you see is a collection of narratives, which, ironically, are good examples of hodgepodge and confusion," says Craig.

Auerick and Craig also explain how CEOs use language to build themselves up. A number of examples emerge: CEO as mentor, warrior, chairman, modernizer, or great leader. Bill Gates, for instance, is a *Warrior*. The world's richest man and CEO of Microsoft is presented as the technology company's website as an engaging, nice next-door-neighbour type of guy. A photograph of Gates with glasses, a mustache and a big grin, alongside

## FORMER NORTEL CEO JOHN ROTH SWITCHED FROM USING 'I' TO 'WE' TO DOWNPLAY PERSONAL FAILURE

"It's Letter," is meant "to convince read on to accept that such a close relationship with the financial world could only have sound and tellable financial information to report." Mean while, on the way, there's something about the impact of a 1999 activist case on the revenue, income and stability of the corporation. A hyperbole, scribbled by hand below Gates's photo that says "any time, any place, any device," implies that the company will always be able to satisfy its customers' needs. "That," conclude the authors, "Manor's initials in crude red ink, portraying itself as universal, almost divine, being."

Some CEOs, we see, themselves as gods. Jack Welch, CEO of GE from 1981 to 2000, was a shareholder letter in his last year at the company that inter "almost biblical metaphors," where he presents his "credo of vision and beliefs." Noted as "Nortel's Jack" for his policy of regularly firing the bottom performers as part of his staff, Welch declares that to keep these individuals on would be not only a failure of management, but also an act of "false kindness." And then there are the recent mergers, disguised with jargons, a crisis often seen among CEOs of technology companies. Ted Levitt of the Australian telecommunications giant Telstra Corp. promises in a letter to shareholders the company would deliver "specific, verifiable experience across all devices and all platforms," and its customers could expect a "new expe-



CEO of Bell, Manors's words of blarney got him in an awkward divorce split

rience at literally every touch point." "You tell me," says Craig, "what does this mean?"

Easier to decipher—but as less disconcerting—are the messages of John Roth. In 2000, the then-CEO of Nortel Networks was the epitome of business success. He led Nortel as its stock shot through the stratosphere in July, 2000, reaching \$154 a share. He was still leader when the company's fortunes turned and its stock price plummeted. It was only way down, in March 2001, when he

resigned what Auerick and Craig call an "executive letter" to shareholders, published in newspaper ads across the country. Released three weeks after the company's worst performance could be gauged from U.S. economic downturn, the letter said "the work of a year 1999," says Auerick and Craig—pulls blame away from Roth. Using positive language—Nortel is "an industry leader" and an "innovator"—Roth creates an image of financial well-being. The part of the letter is "powerful, reassuring, first-hand historical material, grounded off by hyperbole," they say. But by shifting from the word "we" to "I," Roth admits the bad news of the impact of a luxury U.S. economy collapse, and not his own personal act of failure. In the end, the letter is hollow, Auerick and Craig write. "When times were good, Roth let the cult of CEO personality prevail," the authors say. "But when times were tough, he demoted himself from personal hubbly."

In a world increasingly focused on accountability, Auerick and Craig argue for more monitoring of the written and spoken words of CEOs. "All the rules, regulations and governing standards under the sun will not ensure good corporate behaviour in the absence of effective monitoring," they say. "CEO speak requires a good dose of accountability," and make executives own better practices themselves, if they just learn to listen. ■

# The silent treatment

**We're supposed to be getting a drug plan strategy. Too bad no one's been consulted.**

**BY NICHOLAS DOLAN** • As a gathering at the Parliament of Ontario in Ottawa last week, a bunch of doctors and pharmacists flows up their collective hands. There, through the windows of the conference hall and beyond the Rideau Canal, stood Parliament Hill, seat of government. It may as well have been located across the Potomac for all the answer they were getting. Gathered to discuss something called the National Pharmaceutical Strategy, the group was discussing instead how little there was to talk about. Almost two years after its launch, a federal-provincial task force charged with drawing up a strategy for a national drug plan had yet to talk to the very people who know most about drugs: the doctors who prescribe them, the pharmacists who dispense them, the people who take them.

The NPS was former prime minister Paul Martin's brainchild, part of his 543-bill initiative to fix health care. "For a government," two-line members' meeting in September 2004, the premiers had demanded that the feds help defray their rising pharmaceutical costs. Over the last decade, they'd paid out drug costs more than 60 per cent, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information. Martin's response to the crisis, the NPS, which would examine such possibilities as a comprehensive drug plan and a health buying program, before reporting back in June 2006.

Since then, Health Canada and its provincial counterparts, excluding Quebec, which is not involved in the process, have met behind closed doors, providing few hints of what they're planning for this summer's deadline. "In the absence of any kind of free evening discussion, what we're seeing is a bunch of speculation and lots of rumour and innuendo," says Marc Kealey, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists' Association. Innuendo? By no means. Nurses, for example, are convinced the process will be derailed by industry. "You can bet that pharmaceutical corporations have been actively working very hard," Linda Sila, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, said in one release. These pharmaceutical companies, meanwhile, complain bitterly they've not been consulted. Others worry that the NPS is a cost-containment exercise born by provincial health-care workers who look from their health care expertise. "You run the danger of listening purely fiscal discussion," says one nurse at the symposium.

While a Health Canada spokesman said consultations with stakeholders would happen later in the process—after the deadline—the process leaves some skeptical. "The worry is that doctors are being made use in the absence of clinical practice experience and patient involvement," said Brian Harrison of the Better Pharmacists Coalition.

## 'WHAT WE'RE SEEING IS A WHOLE BUNCH OF SPECULATION AND LOTS OF RUMOUR AND INNUENDO.' NOT TO MENTION PARANOIA.

"That's the part as much out of the barn for as to change things," Harrison, who says he has enough trouble getting the attention of his own provincial board, Ontario, wonders why the federal government is involved at all. "Can you imagine if you need to prescribe for the medication you need to prolong your life—or save your life—if they have control over that? It's a very scary prospect," he adds. "These are the same people who brought us the gun registry."

As noted, since at the symposium, says the NPS is a creature of the Martin Liberals, with little support from Stephen Harper. What will happen on June 30, the task force deadline? "I will bet you nothing will happen," says Kealey. Meanwhile, by the NPS's own figures, an million Canadians will continue living with inadequate drug coverage. ■

**IT'S NOT THE BUILDING THAT'S MAKING YOU SICK**

Buildings with poor ventilation, one of the commonly accepted culprits in the spread of "sick building syndrome," may not be to blame after all. The syndrome has been linked to a mild illness in employees, created by inadequate or faulty air supply. A study of 4,000 sick employees in Canada says the symptoms have less to do with the building and more to do with job stress, heavy workload, lack of autonomy, and smelly toilets.



MR. SKILLING: Enron's Jeffrey Skilling offered a "harvest of blarney, bluster and business-speak hodgepodge"

## DID HE REALLY

## DIE ON

## THE CROSS?

In a new book, Michael Baigent, the dean of alternative-Jesus historians, known best for suing Dan Vinci Code author Dan Brown, calls the Crucifixion an elaborate hoax

**BY BRIAN KOPPEL** • The Greatest Story Ever Told hardly seems to describe it: Jesus Christ is the most important figure in Western history; given the West's impact on the rest of the world, possibly in all human history. History, undertaken in the four Gospels—which depict his transformation from Jesus of Nazareth into Jesus Christ—is such a deep in the cultural DNA of the West. Traditionalist Christians embrace it as the literal truth, while millions of others view it as a combination of fact and metaphor, but even skeptics and followers of other faiths know it. For almost 2,000 years, the New Testament has inspired countless works of art, from masterpieces to the abolition of slavery; it has also set armies marching and led the fires of the Inquisition. Its impact has been so powerful and so extensive that those who question have pursued or excluded—be it not, say, people and, often, women, still want in. For this reason, there has always been a hunger for alternative views of Christ's story.

During the last 200 years, scholars in a steadily more secular West have tried to get behind the Jesus of faith—the divine incarnation who walked on water and raised the dead—to find the Jesus of history, a Jewish preacher with a radical view all to his own neighbors. Often democracy known, especially in the U.S., as the Jesus Wars, the historical quest has proved astonishingly fruitful for context, yielding historians a clearer understanding of Jesus's essential Jewishness and the social and political upheavals of first-century Israel.

Much of that has come from the 19th-century discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, which record the organization, beliefs and spiritual yearnings of some variety of Jewish Jews. And the 1945 Nag Hammadi find in Egypt of a store of Gnostic Christian texts, rejected by orthodox believers 1,500 years before, has shed new light on the tangled history of early Christianity. Even traditionalist Christians, who have had to face challenges based on these discoveries, have been cheered by some as theological dead, particularly the 1966 unearthing of the skeletal remains of a crucified man, complete with an iron nail driven through his hand bone. It's been an effective rebuff to Gospel opponents who claim that the Romans never mistreated (as opposed to used) a victim to his cross.

But still nothing on Jesus the man, no actual data documents of the sort historians yearn for, a script, say, made out to Jesus of Nazareth for purchase of a plot of land. Outside the religiously powered and selective beliefs of the

New Testament—John's Gospel starts with a tantalizing "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written"—there is little else for historians to mine. Even the extra-canonical books such as those tamed up at Nag Ham-

**HE BELIEVES THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN BY JESUS AFTER HIS SUPPOSED DEATH**



HERE'S WHAT: Michael Baigent knows Jesus in London, where he's suing Dan Brown

maad, the so-called apocrypha that were not allowed into the New Testament when it was finally hammered out in the fourth and fifth centuries, are still within the faith tradition, concerned with the divine Christ, not the human Jesus. There is sufficient third-party evidence—brief references by Roman observers—to convince the most secular historian that Jesus lived, preached, organized the faith theories and non-theistic, but that's all.

It's clearly not enough for a vociferous contemporary audience. And so the door is wide open for fiction writers like Dan Brown, whose *The Da Vinci Code* hasn't dominated bestseller lists for three years in its twelve different editions. Brown's backstory of a misbegotten Church, cruelly suppressing all knowledge of Christ's marriage to Mary Magdalene and, why is, any trace of the historic primitive Christianity affirmed "the sacred feminine" principle, has resonated with millions of women (and men). And now Michael Baigent, the dean of alternative Jesus historians, has called the Crucifixion an elaborate hoax—making out not only the historic Jesus but also Christianity, but the very essence of secular historians' pitifully brief list of sure things.

Jesus was sentenced to the cross by Pontius Pilate all right, argues Baigent in *The Jesus Papers: Exposing the Greatest Cover-Up in History* (HarperCollins), but that's where his version diverges, in part really, from that of the Gospels. Pilate didn't want him dead (Baigent's Jesus is a prominent Jew friendly to Rome), but didn't dare face down a mob of anti-Roman Jews demanding his execution. So Pilate had Jesus hung on the cross, but he also had him taken down alive and smuggled to safety in Egypt.

Baigent, 58, is currently in the news for suing Brown for plagiarism in London court, but that's not his first appearance in headlines. Twenty-four years ago, with co-authors Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, Baigent published *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, a controversial story claiming that Jesus married and fathered a bloodline that still has living descendants. (They haven't been too prominent recently, but once they were kings of France.) That headline, and not the cup Christ used at the Last Supper, is the real Holy Grail. The extraordinary truth, Baigent wrote, guarded for hundreds of years by a secret society, is another to organized Christianity, particularly the papacy, which has always been devoted to suppressing evidence—often violently—about the real Jesus.

Holy Blood's content is sensation at the time, and hasn't really gone away. In 2002, when the then-*Chicago Tribune* pulled up on stories of these ideas and ran with them (and bought an edition copies sold), the novel's paid license to his pioneering predecessors by naming a major character after two of them: Sir Leigh Teabing (an anagram of Baigent).

also walks with a limp, just like Henry Lincoln, but Brown terrified in court that the physical disability was just an embarrassing coincidence. In any event, far from being mollified by Brown's homages, Leigh and Baigent called their solicitors.

It was the last thing he wanted to do," says Baigent in an interview with *Time*. "It's a terrible thing for a writer to see another writer, and it's made me angry. I was driven to it." But authors are nothing except their intellectual property, he contended. "You want to use it, you pay for it, just like a filmmaker who wants to make a movie of your book." Still, Baigent acknowledged that Holy Blood was merely the first serious test case for him as an author. Even Maria Luther moved her antechamber during the last-century Protestant Reformation, in modern times, so did Charles Darwin, an English geologist and professor at Mount St. Vincent's College, Williams University (now Connecticut), in 1978. Nor does Brown care all of Holy Blood's concerns. Most notably, as with *Da Vinci Codes*, he third away from any suggestion the Crucifixion never occurred. But more to the point, no matter how much Baigent's work may have aided Brown's, Baigent is quick to agree the yardstick has already done *The Jesus Papers* a lot of good. "The *Cody* opened all those questions about Christ and Christianity to a mass public, and opened publishers' eyes to the fact religion discussion is no niche market—a lot of people are very interested. It's clear that the world is ripe for radical re-evaluations of Jesus, scholars may be appalled at Brown and Baigent both, but the public is certainly with the former—and quite possibly ready for the latter."

With ex-ministry finished and his publicity over, yet to be paid, Baigent is simply waiting now, for the judge's decision and for what he expects to be a furious counterattack on his new book. Others have written up to denouncing Christ's existence entirely, including John A. Leary's notorious 1979 volume *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*, which had Jesus with the eyelids first for a major mainstream cult. More seriously, one year ago, Tom Harper's *The Pagan Christ*, which shares many key themes with *The Jesus Papers*, declared that atheistic Christianity was based on a fleshly life-savior instead of a cryptic order that had been around for millennia to free humankind from evil as it was supposedly born. And Harper was greeted with a polite hearing. But that's the problem, Baigent agrees, so how can this discussion be a more respectable position than, well,

## PILATE DIDN'T WANT JESUS DEAD BUT HE DIDN'T DARE FACE DOWN A MOB OF ANTI-ROMAN JEWS DEMANDING HIS EXECUTION



DAN BROWN IS TERRIBLE. The *Da Vinci Code* has dominated headlines here for three years

something that sounds like a cerebral tick. But Baigent can't follow Harper down that road. "The core Christ position is as dependable as mountains," he says. "Only because of Tacitus—a highly paid Roman historian with good access to contemporary documents—saying that Pontius Pilate crucified him." Nor is there any-

thing particularly new with the notion that, while Jesus was crucified, he did not die due to the cross. In fact, it's almost 2,000 years old. Scholars pondered the Jesus' violent death left behind a small band of followers fixed with working out the meaning of the most shocking moment in their lives. From earliest Christian times, there were arguments that the resurrection had not really happened, that Jesus had somehow swapped his cup of suffering. Sometimes he did it spiritually (some Christian Gnostics taught that the divine Christ fled the human body, Jesus, before death), sometimes literally, either by someone taking his place on the actual cross (locally Simon the Cyrene, whom the Gospels portray as helping Christ carry his cross), or by what's commonly known as the "swapon theory." Jesus fell into a comatose state, not until or drug-induced, and was mistakenly judged dead by his executioners.

No mainstream scholar accepts the view survived into as anything more than dogmatic apocryphal, proven false or simply folklore. Like the old legend that Jesus visited Britain as a knight-ager with his great uncle Joseph of Arimathea, a version was immortalized in William Blake's hymn "Jerusalem." And did Jesus first to ancient times? Well, upon England's morning groves? (Or perhaps to explain the original "empty tomb" reading of Mark's Gospel—the conclusion that mentions the Ribes Lord was added centuries later. For Baigent, a revised and already opened-up Gospel explains this counteractive better than rising from the dead.)

For secular historians, the *Crucifixion* is a distant, unremembered truth about Jesus—some virtually debate his life from the first of his deeds (Peter's is also the first figure Jesus' death to become part of the *Passion Gospel*, the great widely read and popular summary of Christian faith. "For our use, he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.") For religious historians and are Christians in general—at least near the bounds of orthodoxy were set in the early centuries—the question has always been stark: no crucifixion means no resurrection, no once and for all sacrifice for the sins of humanity, no salvation, no faith.

Gnostic Christians, whose creed was without and dogma free, orthodoxy and, perhaps, mostly a belief in equality for women—have had good press in modern eras. They lost the battle with those Christians who were coexisting around a central, solid, and solid system and modern Christendom. But the Gnostics didn't stress faith, but individual experience, and I agree it's better to know this to believe. Even the canonical Gospels are in doubt. Christ had a kind of first-century popularity, possibly for that time coming to be his preach and secret teachings about the Kingdom of God for the masses. Still, think the Gnostics were more as disciples

than that the more dogma, and faith-based Christians. I don't mean to say an religious—down the Romanist concept that if you get the symbols right, it will restore in the human mind and cause physical and spiritual effects, give understanding by experience. I believe that one. I'd rather meditate in an old temple than read about its history."

Given his conviction that the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith were entirely separate beings, his high regard for the Gnostics (the first source for escaping the crisis, since), and his belief in Tacitus's evidence, Baigent was practically bound to come combining the New Testament for hints of a fake crucifixion. And that raises the single largest problem: modern versions of an alternative Jesus, therefore one that comes into the history into to throw up their hands. Once you come to accept that the Gospels were heavily edited, how do you judge which parts to trust?

To do this, is virtually impossible in New Testament studies, as if posing the question, the authors judged themselves as no more than those the writers had. If you're in the American Catholic paper John Dominic Crossan named as a few of the seven distinct versions of Jesus, ranging from polished scholarly to the most popular, in recent books by academics—Romance, to be thought in, that too many in the field write "this is legend and call it history" (He didn't seem to notice that, from ancient scrolls, a small portion, he was just as gaily.) Like any I know, Baigent says for plausibility—for what makes sense in his own time, while not doing violence to the plain testimony of whatever evidence he can muster. He also offers what scholars call "the criteria of embarrassment." "The New Testament is basically a history of the early church," he says, "and any thing in it that runs counter to later tradition had a better than average chance of being true. Or that simply sticks out, all message—I always appreciate antithetical material. Some of it is bound to be fantasy, but some is factual."

So Baigent accepts most of what has rapidly become standard alternative Jesus belief. Mary Magdalene was "probably" Jewish, certainly his closest confidante—the Gnostic gospels say she had a "secret" knowledge from Jesus in 140's in the Holy Land, Baigent, Ma, most other scholars in his field at the time, was rather indifferent in orthodox Christianity of their own esoteric. But the success of *The Da Vinci Code*'s exploration of the Church's supposed "hallowed" narrative "has become one of the most prominent and influential features in the alternative Jesus debate. In *The Jesus Papers*, Baigent says, this narrative came to be one of the most widely held for building the Victorian. And it is the Vatican he has more. Again,

like most who see a Church's long conspiracy to hide the truth, Baigent here's a word to say about Greek Orthodoxy or even fundamentalism (his position). "The Vatican is in control," he notes. "It's the her to its Roman controlling group that spread this religion down 1,600 years ago, that killed out the feminine doctrine that Jesus favored, and then named him from God."

Less commonly, Baigent also believes that Christ was married by the Zoroastrian—militant, occasionally



DEAD END: BROWN'S view of the Christ of the House of David

## SAUL DAN BROWN WAS THE LAST THING BAIGENT WANTED TO DO: 'IT'S MADE ME ANGRY I WAS DRIVEN TO IT'

modern Jesus opposed to Roman rule and concerned to meaning along high pass over head who was both a descendant of David (though Jesus's father Joseph) and Adam, the first high priest. (Like's Gospel says Mary was of his line.) The most hated symbol of Roman control was its taxes, when, as described in Matthew 22:17, so Roman Jews demanded of Jesus. "It is lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" they were asking a heated question, one that would bring his *Radicalism* of alignment with the open. The Zoroastrian, in Baigent's trading, were known as the *Magi* or *Sacerdotes*—"Reader, you

know the things that are Caesar's"—but essentially mean "tax."

Why Christ is one of that way is the main argument of *The Jesus Papers*, one that may be lost in the *Crucifixion* favor. (He may be before him, Baigent says a Jesus who had become linked with Egyptian mythic hero, a man who had become a star and a star teacher, no longer merely in the mythic culture the Zoroastrian had lived here. Not really, they don't sound like the Roman authorities. "My understanding was that Jesus was a Jewish man," Baigent says, meeting



DEAD END: BROWN'S view of the Christ of the House of David

Pilate's need to avoid contacting a prominent Jew who was friendly to Rome, balanced by the risk of public unrest in a notoriously unruly province. So Pilate can't do a deal with the Zoroastrian—they could have their sacrificial victim or their escape the cult make up his mind which, but only if those Jews had to come down alone, and depart from Rome to Egypt, Baigent believes. One of his key points of evidence is that the Greek language, distinct between the words for "living body" and "corpse," unlike Latin and English, where "body" can do for either. And when Joseph of Arimathea comes to Pilate, in the Gospel of

Mark, to ask the Jews' "body," the word he uses means, "the living body."

It's not much to support a claim to authorship as Baigent's. He has arguable cause for some of his big picture conclusions—there's plenty of evidence, for one, that Jesus, and the early Church after him, accorded women a higher status than the surrounding pagan or Jewish cultures. Given that, and the role of later Christianity in Western misogyny, Mary Magdalene may well have played a larger role in Christ's life than the male audience of the New Testament wanted to acknowledge. And it's equally true that the stream of Christian thought that eventually hardened into orthodoxy were not the sum of early responses to Jesus of Nazareth.

But, to apply his own coin of plausibility and embarrassment, is it more likely that Mark candidly gave away the secret of the Crucifixion, or that he innocently mixed up two words he may have thought of as synonymous? It's more likely that Mary's supposed Aeonic descent—the realm thereof leading to the Zealot threat—was left in Luke, because it was too well known to be removed, or because it was a minor detail? Baigent's claim here renders his reads odd. And, in fact, they are not his sole or even main support. Those, contrary enough, are matters of faith.

Baigent actually begins *The Jesus Papers*—the title of which does not become meaningful until the end of the book—with a story. Years ago, a respected Anglican cleric told Baigent that a long dead, famous churchman named Canon Alfred Lilley (died 1948) had told him that he, Lilley, had seen indisputable evidence about 1862 that Christ was still alive as a CF, long after the Crucifixion. Baigent is sure he will never use this proof, but he still believes in it. The story is, in effect, a version of Cardinal Richelieu's secret commission: new knowledge, passed down one year of travel leads to another and another, over the course of more than a century. And Baigent and author Catherine, who drew from his 21 years of familiarity with the underground made in Middle Eastern antiquities: "The things I've seen and heard about," he says, "will hopefully see the light of day sometime. I do have to tell readers about them, but I can't base a book on unreviewed evidence." At the heart of his conclusions about Jesus are Arabic papyri bearing a letter to the Jewish high priest, the firstborn, which Baigent has seen, and actually held in his hands. (Unfortunately he isn't real Arabic.) The author believes the letter was written by Jesus himself after his supposed death, and Jesus denies that he had ever called himself the Jewish, physical son of God.

Even for those who deny his divinity, and years for a new version of his story, the truth about Jesus is a story of faith. It

# EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT HOW JESUS SURVIVED

Author Michael Baigent outlines his theory of why and how the hoax was done

When morning comes, he is seated outdoors. This time he begins to teach in the Temple, narrating parables to the crowds who had come to hear him, and, by so doing, attracting the hostile press who were intent on intensifying his activities. It was during this second day that a crucial event occurred, one that directly concerned a totally important problem in Jesus: the question of paying taxes to Caesar.

Jesus knew the reality of the political situation at Judaea under the client ruler of the Romans. The latter writers of the Gospels also knew the unspoken nature of this issue. According to Matthew's account (23:47), the Pharisees and Herodians—both supporters of the pro-Roman establishment—were up to Jesus and asked him bluntly and plainly: "Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

Now, we must be clear, this was an extremely loaded question. In the context of the issue, it was fundamental, even explosive. It had been the question of tax and the refusal to pay it that triggered the first rebellion against the Romans in A.D. 6 by Judas of Galilee, that rebel hero had opened up his hell of bloodshed. To the Zealots—and to many less committed Jews—the tax was the symbol of all that was wrong with Judaea. We can be certain that Jesus knew the implications of the answer—as would have the

later readers of the Gospel accounts. Jesus would have had to meticulously answer whatever answer he gave was going to get him in trouble with one or the other faction. To answer yes would get him in trouble with the Zealots, and to answer no would bring condemnation from the Romans and their supporters among the priesthood.

So what did Jesus do? We all know the answer. He asked for a coin. They gave him a Roman denarius. Jesus looked at the coin and asked, "Whose head is this? Whose name?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

"Very well," replied Jesus. "Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar—and to God what belongs to God" (Matthew 22:19-22).

At that time, and at that place, this was not just a clever and cute riddle—the Jesus equivalent of a modern sound-bite—but an outrageous and provocative challenge to the Zealots. Inarguable the problem that the Zealots, whose entire focus was the removal or destruction of Rome's hold over Judaea, had organized a dynastic marriage between Joseph, a son of the royal line of David, and Mary, of the priestly line of Aaron, and to produce a child, Jesus—the "Saviour of Israel"—whom both

rightful king and high priest. Jesus brought up to fulfill his role, he was ten Jerusalem in a month, he was in accordance with all the prophecies, he does every thing that is expected of him—and this is all in one moment. Up until this point, the Zealots would have been very pleased with the way things were going. But then, in an unexpected move, their messiah already refuses to get "pay the tax," he is saying, "It means nothing." For his true language—as he understood it—was not the Hebrew.

The Zealot supporters of Jesus must have been appalled with rage, especially at the public and public nature of events. Their carefully constructed messiah had rejected them—had betrayed them. And, why, they would reject him. They had to get rid of Jesus so that another messiah leader could rise. Perhaps his brother James, who was more in tune with the political aspirations of the Zealots. Certainly, after the removal of Jesus from the scene, James was leading the vanguard of militant Jews in Jerusalem.

It is not hard to suppose that the Zealots set Jesus up—if they couldn't have a leader, then at least they could have a martyr. He knew they had to betray him—and it is interesting that that man who was being regarded as the messiah, Jesus himself, was not only a Zealot. He was, we can imagine, a Zealot. He was a Zealot. He did what they wanted. He pointed out Jesus to the armed guards who came to make the arrest. And as he was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked (as recorded in the

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original Gk, "Am I a Zealot, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs?" (Matthew 26:65) Jesus thus reveals—and incidentally, so does the writer of the Gospel of Mark—how he knew the political reality of the time.

If the Sadducees nonetheless wanted to be rid of Jesus because they saw him as a threat to their power, and the Zealots, for different reasons, wanted to be rid of Jesus, then word of this would have reached Pilate. And this intelligence would have put him in a very difficult position. Pilate was Rome's official representative in Judaea, and Rome's most important ally with the Jews was that they declined to pay tribute to Caesar. Yet here was a leading Jew—the legitimate king no less—telling his people to pay the tax. How could Pilate say, let alone condemn, such a man who, on the face of it, was supporting Roman rule? Pilate would himself be charged with denigration of duty should he proceed with the crude measures of such a supporter.

The New Testament recognizes "the Jews" as having Jesus's blood. And that apparent gift of the Jews was for the audience in the Vatican and second from the archbishop in 1960. But it would now be clear, it was not "the Jews" in general who were calling for Jesus's arrest and execution, but the militant Zealots, those who hated the Romans and would sacrifice even more of their fellow Jews. In the scenario presented here, Pilate would have found himself in a serious dilemma: to keep peace he had to try, on the one hand, to meet a Jew who was supporting Rome but whose sentence was creating public disorder, the flames of which were being fanned by the disgruntled Zealots. Pilate needed to try to square the circle on this, he desperately needed a deal.

And the deal, I suggest, was this: that he try Jesus and condemn him as a political agitator, thus appeasing the Zealots, who threatened widespread disorder. This was the last thing Pilate needed in his wish, especially since he was aware that he was falling out of favor with the Roman authorities. But while he demanded Jesus and had to go through with the required sentence of crucifixion, he could see that there was a reported to Rome that Jesus had actually died. So Pilate took steps to ensure that Jesus would survive. This broke with a number of the tenets of the Jewish faith, the Jewish faith of Jesus's time.

To be sure, it is not clear how Jesus had been killed. Just how could Jesus have survived? Was it possible at all to survive a crucifixion of any length of time?

Crucifixion was not so much an execution as a torturing to death. The procedure was very simple: the victim was tied, hanging to the crossbar, while his feet were supported on

a block at the base of the cross. His feet were also usually tied at the back, although at least the example recovered by archaeologists reveals that a nail might be driven through each ankle. The weight of the hanging body would be creating very difficult and it could be envisaged only by constantly pushing upwards with the legs in order to relieve the terrible strain. For medical, anatomical and religious reasons, the ability to keep pushing. When this happened, the body would be, hanging/became impossible, and the crucified person died by asphyxiation. This was restricted to take about three days.

An act of mercy—only the brutal Romans could come up with such a definition—the legs of the victims were often broken and deprived of any strength whatsoever to maintain

## HE MAY HAVE BEEN SEDATED ON THE CROSS, TO APPEAR DEAD

the weight of the body. The body would drop, and die by asphyxiation rapidly followed. We can see this in the New Testament. John reports that the legs of the two Zealots crucified beside Jesus were broken, but while they came to break Jesus's legs, "the whole lot already" (John 19:32-33).

Clearly it would be difficult to survive a crucifixion, but it was not impossible. Jesus, for example, reports that he came upon three of his former colleagues in one large group of crucified captives. He went to Titus asking for mercy, begging that they might be taken down. Titus agreed, and the three men were brought down from the cross. Despite professional medical attention, two of them died, but the third survived.

Could Jesus have survived such a crucifixion in Joseph's report? There are traditions in Islam that say so. The Koran's story of "They [disbelievers/infidels] could be well be translated as "They [disbelievers] saw his death on the cross" but the Koran is a very late text, even though it undoubtedly can carry dates and traditions. Perhaps this is the view for as a statement by someone in the

second century AD, a complaint about the beliefs of a fan Zepherian Gnostic. Besides, he explains that this heretic taught that Jesus had been substituted during the journey to Golgotha and that this substitute, Isidorus of Cyrene, and died in Jesus's stead.

If Jesus survived without being substituted, how could it have happened? Hugh Schonfield, in his *The Passover Plot*, suggests that Jesus was drugged—sedated on the cross such that he appeared dead but could be revived later, after he had been taken down. This is by no means such a wild idea, and it has received a sympathetic hearing. For example, in a television program on the crucifixion broadcast by the BBC in 2004 called *Did Jesus Die?* Elaine Pagels looked to fiction. In a book, which, she noted, suggested that Jesus "had been used as an opiate, that he was removed quite early and then for could we have survived." And, she concluded, "that's certainly a possibility."

There is a certain medical rationale to the Gospel that Jesus be sedated by this procedure while on the cross, since it explains that he was dying. A person sedated to sleep was placed on the end of a long nail and held up to him. But for Jesus, Jesus, the drink from this sponge apparently cooled him to die. This is a common misconception and suggests that the sponge was soaked not in vinegar, as tradition has it, but rather in something that would have caused him to lose consciousness—some sort of drug, for example. And there was just this type of drug available in the Middle East.

It was known that a sponge soaked in a mixture of opium and other compounds such as belladonna and hushers served as a great anesthetic. Such sponges would be soaked in the mixture, then dried for storage or transport. When it was necessary to induce unconsciousness—for surgery, for example—a sponge would be soaked in water to activate the drugs and then placed over the nose and mouth of the subject, who would promptly lose consciousness. Given the description of the crucifixion on the cross and the rapid apparent "death" of Jesus, this is a plausible suggestion that this use of a drugged sponge was the cause.

No matter how carefully a "drugged" crucifixion might have been carried out (and it would be for Jesus to survive), there was no way to stop the effect that shock might have had upon him. Crucifixion, even if it was an anesthetic, both physically and mentally, to be rendered unconscious would reduce the effect of the trauma and thus increase the chance of survival, so the drug would have been a further benefit in that regard too.

There are some further points that are striking. John's Gospel not only says that a spear was thrust into Jesus's side and that blood came out. Taken at face value, we can conclude two things from that story: first, that the



THE FOLLOWING IS BACK SPOT IN HIS MOUTH. THE SPEAR, WAS COMMONLY USED TO STOP BLEEDING

spear was not thrust into the brain or heart and so was not immediately life threatening. And second, that the flow of blood would seem to indicate that Jesus was still alive.

All that indicated that was far from to be taken down from the cross, especially if Jesus was in a coma, and that the blood was a sign of life. Crucifixion, even if it was an anesthetic, both physically and mentally, to be rendered unconscious would reduce the effect of the trauma and thus increase the chance of survival, so the drug would have been a further benefit in that regard too.

And there was a garden second to this, implying that the grounds were precisely one, perhaps also by Joseph.

John also mentions that Jesus was taken down quickly and put into the tomb. Then, in every curious addition, he reports that Joseph of Arimathea and a colleague, Nicodemus, visited the tomb during the night and brought with them very large amounts of spices: myrrh and aloes (John 19:39). This, in fact, could be used simply as a perfume, but there could be another, equally plausible explanation. Both substances have a medicinal use—myrrh notably, which has been used as an aid to stop bleeding. Neither drug is known to have a role in embalming dead bodies. Mark (16:1)

and Luke (24:38) trench obligingly on this theme as well, adding to their story of the tomb that the women—Mary Magdalene and Mary, "mother of James"—through grief and confusion with Jesus when they came to the tomb where the tomb had been sealed. It is also curious that Jesus was supposed to have been crucified next to a garden and a tomb, the latter at least owned by Joseph of Arimathea. This all rather convenient story the heart. Could it be that the crucifixion itself was private? Perhaps another to someone to what was occurring? Luke (23:49) refers to the crowd watching were standing at a distance. Perhaps they were afraid of Jesus?

In fact, the description of the events of Golgotha suggests that the site of the crucifixion was in the Kidder valley, where there are many rock cut tombs to this day and where is also located the Garden of Gethsemane, which may have been the private garden involved and one with which Jesus was familiar.

But there is yet another tidbit that we need to note. In the Gospel of Mark, Joseph of Arimathea is described as visiting Pilate and requesting the body of Jesus. Pilate asks if Jesus is dead and is surprised when told that he is indeed, for his demise seems a very rapid to Pilate. But since Jesus is dead, Pilate allows Joseph to take that body down. We look at the original Greek text, we see an important point being made: when Joseph asks Pilate for Jesus's body, the word used for "body" is *semei*. In Greek this denotes a living body. When Pilate agrees that Joseph can take the body down from the cross, the word he uses for "body" is *semei* (Mark 15:43-45). This means a corpse. In other words, the Greek text of Mark's Gospel is insisting to state that while Joseph is asking for the living body of Jesus, Pilate grants him what he believes to be the corpse. Jesus's survival is revealed right there in the second Gospel account.

If the writer of this Gospel had wished to state that he, it would have been very easy to state simply to use the word for both states: *semei*—either both Joseph and Pilate speaking of the same body. But the writer does not so to be consistent. Could he because it was too well known a fact for him to get away with any manipulation of it? This had to wait for the translations of the New Testament from Greek to Latin in the Latin Bible—the Vulgate—the word corpse was used by both Pilate and Joseph of Arimathea, and this simply means "body" in any sense of the word. The telling of this story in the Gospel of Mark is a clear sign.

Again, it takes only a slight shift of perspective, a standing aside from the theological dogmas, to see how Jesus could very well have survived. H

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HIS SON'S DESCENT IS 'A NIGHARE THAT YOU WANT TO GO AWAY—BUT IS ALWAYS THERE'

ON THE WATERFRONT Gary Troll was once well-known and successful Vancouver restaurateur

## A REVERSE MIDAS TOUCH

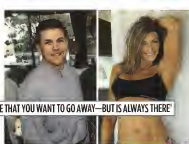
Everything Gary Troll touches turns a profit. His son wasn't quite so lucky.

**BY HANLEY HADDONDALE** • The day after his big loss in a lottery win, he stood at a million, Gary Troll was back at work, running his iconic and opulent waterfront restaurant in busy West Vancouver. Like every other morning, the successful businessman came in well before dawn on Dec. 15, 1996, serving coffee and sports gossip to a small crowd of regulars—a mix of lawyers and workmen. Legend has it that everything the hawklike Troll touches turns a profit (the previous year he was a total of \$25,000 on two 6/49 tickets). Troll's Restaurant at Horseshoe Bay—its big name at the time—wasn't even his only locally famous business. He also owns Pemberton Station, a popular pub in the neighbouring suburb of North Vancouver.

But Troll's long-ago son Jason seems to have been afflicted with reverse Midas touch. Currently sitting in a Seattle jail cell, the 19-

year-old, who tried to follow in his father's restaurant footsteps, awaits his March 30 sentencing for the possession of a listed chemical. In June, he and his wife, Michelle Haway Troll, were arrested trying to cross the U.S. border with 77 kg ofephedrine, the active ingredient in suchamphetamine. (Haway Troll was not charged.) Though he faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, he'll likely do less time: Troll pleaded guilty to possession, admitting as part of his

plea bargain that he knew, or had reasonable cause to believe, that theephedrine was likely to be used in the manufacture of illicit drugs. Jason Troll, 19, a former student at Vancouver's North Shore, has grappled a night-long community of old school restaurateurs who "all know and like Gary." Kathy Cleveland, 51, owner of Coco Loco, landed her first job with Gary Troll's father, Joe, at 15. She recalls that, as a young man, Jason Troll was



AS AN YOUNG man, Jason Troll, who was armed with 77 kg ofephedrine "overriding looking" and "debonair." But, she says, she thinks the younger Troll became trapped in a high-octane world he couldn't escape. As Michel Segar, owner of West Vancouver's Chris Michel restaurant, says, "The problem with this business is it draws on so much to be somebody else—we must look richer, drink more, have more. Most of it is show but you get stuck in it. In the alcohol, the drugs."

Also easily described as "engaging" and "hypnotic" in media interviews, Jason Troll used his hand in the restaurant business. But he fell from the high life of Vancouver cuisine, and was ousted from West Vancouver's Coco Loco. After a short time in a restaurant in Seattle, he was arrested on charges of illegal gambling, and subsequently was involved in legal wranglings with Vancouver's



LUCKY LOTTO: Gary Troll and his wife, Carol Troll, won a \$1 million lottery in 1996

Lazy Day Café & Bakery in 2002 and Burns Bay's Playhouse the following year—the latter alleging that he misled old friends and neighbors in the sale of \$225,000. At this point, Troll began a new career—as a fitness trainer to his bodybuilding wife, who suffers from multiple sclerosis. Together, between 2002 and 2005, the couple attended a

Liberty—also found the epidemic packages among Harry Troll's dachshund.

Gary Troll lost his teen Jason at 30 years. The two had been very close, as an interview with Michael, Troll described him as "an amazing athlete," who "managed three large sumo-wrestles before he was 14 years old." By the time life in the fast lane caught up to his son, Gary Troll was working night and day. But he knew in the back of his mind, he says, that "something was wrong" with Jason. As for their subsequent split, Troll will only say that Jason was "having a financial crisis on family and friends and the business. When he started going down the road—I couldn't tolerate that. I just couldn't tolerate his behavior." He now describes his son's descent to "a nightmare, that you always want to go away—but it always there."

Jason lost three children from a previous marriage. Last week, just back from Disney land with the youngest, Gary Troll says he's got "the three most beautiful kids in the world," whom he proudly supports. "I can help those kids," he says, "but I can't help my son." When apprehended at the border, Jason admitted to U.S. agents that he'd made a deal to bringephedrine into the U.S., but that his American-born wife, who describes Jason as her "soulmate," and her unborn, knew nothing of the plan. "I did it myself," Troll told the authorities. "We needed the money." ■

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**COLLAR OF THE WEEK**

**MERMAIDS ON CALL PAIL TO FIND CAR**

A Zirkowas an old friend of his and has been accused of stealing a \$100,000 car in exchange for helping her recover her stolen car by entering the help of her ex-wife, Julie Chiu, who was not registered with the country's respected association of local business, permitted to report the criminals' activities and put them up in a hotel. She had also asked for money to the local buy companies with which to contact the mermaids.



# A LAWN TO DIE FOR

The teen shot as he cut across a neighbour's pride and joy is an extreme case of our obsession with perfect grass

**BY CARRY DOLLE** — Last week Charles Martin, 16, of Union Township, Ohio, perpetrated a 15-year-old neighbour Larry Murgue's coming across his lawn. Martin, who often sat outside the tree seventy house where he lived alone, was known around the block for his jeeringly praised shrubs and well-manicured grass, of which he was very protective. The Sunday afternoon, the sight of Murgue's passing on his way home to pick up a video

it counts as a price. Steinberg estimates the U.S. lawn care industry at \$10-billion a year, more than the gross domestic product of Vietnam. Competitively, Canadian spending appears modest—\$1.5 billion in 2004, according to Statistics Canada. But that's double the amount Canadians spent five years

## ONE WOMAN WAS SO DISTRAUGHT SHE DUG UP 36 SQ. FEET OF HER GRASS TO HAVE IT ANALYZED

gone was unbearable. He allegedly pulled up a 4th-flooring and fired at the teenager, who collapsed on the lawn. He walked up to him and shot again, point blank, killing him. Minutes later, Martin told a 911 operator: "It'd be just been given me a branch of that, making the other kids burn me and my place, making things up," reported the *Cleveland News Agency* and Associated Press.

While such an extreme case of "lawn rage" is rare, there is plenty of evidence concerning competitive behaviour and the pursuit of the ultimate lawn. "Clearly there is an obsessive drive to have a lawn. Getting the turf to look perfectly maintained and green takes an enormous amount of time and effort," says Ted Steinberg, author of the new book *American Green: The Obsession with the Perfect Lawn*. In it, he cites scores of people growing entire lawns with hand shears, and ordering blades of grass to horticultural experts for advice. One woman was so distraught with the lack of her grass that she dug up 36 sq. feet of it and handed it to a Cornell Cooperative Extension (formally agricultural and environmental sustainability agency) for analysis. Compare that to the state who lit his lawn on fire on combat ration, or the one who fished his pond with Yankee children plastic to avoid any weeds. Then there's the Florida man who mowed the 12th hole of the Augusta National golf course in his backyard.

And the gardener so compelled to sow a mower from running into a nearby lake that the fingers of both hands were off in the mow-off effort. All this, Steinberg calls "the fresh obsession of the lawn."



LAWNS: REMARKABLE: below they are exemplifying virtues such as diligence and discipline.

celties, which signals a growing market place in our own front yard. "There are a lot of people out there who are very concerned with the look of their lawn," says Steinberg, who also is a professor of environmental history at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. What used to be considered a hobby or an easy way to increase property value has been turned into an order for a variety of individual, political and business statements

to court or what constituted a proper lawn in the end, the judge decided that the woman's well-kept lawn was a "deliberately maintained natural landscape" and awarded the fine.

Of course, the plaintiff interpreted the continued lawn as a sign of indifference, neglect and social disorder. "You can see how lawns might symbolize more conservative social values," muses Greenbaum, adding that, heretofore, a well-manicured lawn has



been associated with conformity. Generally, a non-manicured lawn can be seen as reflecting an aesthetic sensibility, one that values freedom, spontaneity and nonconformity. "There are often unconscious ways of thinking that go with a whole set of attitudes and values about people's place in society," Greenbaum says. The lawn even became an issue during the 1960 presidential election, when Steinberg in *American Green*. During a national television program, John F. Kennedy was asked pointedly: "How do you stand on mowing?" If you will come out mowing against it you'll have all the liberals behind you."

Tied up in all the personal and political significance of the perfect lawn is the lawn owner's sense of pride. Most grass is not indigenous to America, says Steinberg, and that makes it incredibly difficult to grow (let alone grow well) outside parts of Europe and Asia. So a gorgeous green demonstrates hard work. And that's why it's not coincidental some of the most beautiful lawns are on corporate grounds. In Toronto, the Marwell building on Bloor Street is famous for its lush, carpet-like lawn, which is protectively covered during cold snaps. "People joked about it," says a former employee, "but not a word of pride" the respect that maintenance is covered by an annual \$100,000 that the three-level CDO now owns alone suggesting the company "takes" on lawn care, he was cast with firm and cautious optimism. (Marwell did not return calls for comment.)

All of this hard work has been made increasingly manageable by advancements in high-tech equipment. In many ways, the lawn is the last frontier of industrialization. "Most studies, editors, terrorists, and others allow you to move more quickly and efficiently," describes Steinberg. And this, in turn, makes the impossible lawn seem even more achievable. The last blade used to be an annual task. "Now it's evolved so that they're being used year round to clean up every last bit of debris on that lawn so that it looks perfect, like an endless living room," says Steinberg. And with 26 million leaf blowers in garages and sheds across the United States, and countless more of them in Canada, the quest for the most pristine lawn on the block is becoming an institutionalized competition.

Feeding into the competition is the proverbial comparison neighbours make about the grass-being greener on the other side, attitudes that, says Steinberg, often, have more to do with a sense of jealousy of an neighbor's lawn. When looking at another lawn from a distance, the angle of vision means that the soil between the blades can't be seen, and the colour appears rich and uniform. So while the grass over there really is greener, the only reason for that is perception. Steinberg's advice: "Get used to brown. It's not such a bad colour." M

# THE HOTTEST ROYALS

Prince Charles and Camilla make a five-day visit to Egypt



JULY 1996: The Duchess of Cornwall arrives at Antak mosque in Cairo.



JULY 1996: In visiting here, the royal couple disdains a path to the old fort in the stark tones of the sea.



GET THREE: The Royal Hospital for sick donkeys, mules and horses in Cairo.



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## METRIC SYSTEM

THE TORONTO BAND THAT'S THE TOAST OF THE INDIE SCENE IS POISED FOR ARENA-ROCK STARDOM. CAN IT SURVIVE ITS OWN ASCENT?

**BY SHARON DEEZE** • It takes some coaxing to get trendy Himes to take off her big black sunglasses for a photo shoot. Guitarist James Shaw never comes around "for the cover," he says. "I'll take them off for the cover." While the Toronto band Metric has a dedicated, upshot teenage persona, backstage one expects to find something more real, more directly—more Canadian. After all, as it turns out, Himes and Shaw also play their members of Broken Social Scene, the massive Toronto collective that wants its heart on its sleeve and breaks down barriers between performer and audience? But on a hot March day in Austin, Tex., at the start of the South by Southwest music festival, Metric's four members (Shaw, lead singer Fanny Himes and James Shaw) are also in the band. I'm giving very little in the way of conversation.

Asked how they met, Himes says, "It's the two 'Queensland' have about her age, she says. 'I don't do this question, I don't see how it serves me.' When their cover manager calls them about an upcoming L.A. photo shoot, Himes says, 'I don't know if we want to be photographed around a market—any pool.' Only once in their confidence called. After the Maclean's photographer is done taking their picture, he hands Himes his camera and asks her to take a photo of him. The rest of the band—waited in the right combination of black-colored suits and thrift-store accessories—stands in, thinking he's looking for a hippie. 'No,' he says, 'just one of us alone.' Embarrassed, they give a nervous laugh and move out of the way. As the photo-



grapher accepts the way Himes is holding the camera, she blinks and fumbles. "I feel a bit weird," she says—only off on the fact that she's not often on the side of the lens.

Later, Metric recalls another photo session one with the Rolling Stones, for whom they opened at two Madison Square Garden gigs in New York in January. They are proud of that experience but make light of it. "You're under threat of invasion if you show the photo to anyone," says Himes. "So I have it in a vault somewhere." Shaw says, "I discovered mine." And Himes reports: "I thought I began to tell how could be interesting story about this night, how they sat in the middle of the band during the Rolling Stones performance and how they sat in the middle of the band during the Rolling Stones performance and how they sat in the middle of the band during the Rolling Stones performance."

Nonetheless, that New York session, which also included a guest appearance on Late Night with Conan O'Brien, was further proof, if any was needed, that all of the Canadian indie

bands currently being collected—Broken Social Scene, Stars, Death From Above 1979 and the New Pornographers—Metric is the most likely to grow into an arena-rock act. Their sound is the addictive combination of heavy guitars, raw voice synth keyboards (played by Himes) and pop-oriented dance beats. With the release of their second album, Live It Out last September, they've already made a major jump on the size of venues they play. They've got a case busier than ever, both of their albums have gone gold in Canada, and when they show up at 100,000 they're gonna give a shot at Seattle, the same venue the Beastie Boys and the Pretenders are playing.

Only two years ago, Metric was performing at a small Austin club on an all-Canadian lineup, far from the red 100,000 scene. MTV and Rolling Stone wasn't exactly beating down the door to talk to them, as they are this once.

"There was no press," says Himes, who is on her third solo tour by now. "We did what I was drinking beer." So while the computers are doing, cut and wonder are in a double an hour, Metric works. And while others hope to impress industry types, Metric works their scene. It's understandable why they keep their distance from the mainstream music biz—after all, the first album Himes and Shaw made, Grow Up and Bleed Away, got caught in red tape with a large record label and was never released—and see less than cutlery with the press, which was then an overnight sensation. Disgustedly so, Metric started their label, Low Gong Records, with entertainment lawyer Chris Taylor and promoter Donald Taylor. "We built this," says Himes. "I've done everything with this from start to finish, from making our CD to designing T-shirts, selling T-shirts, and managing everything. We've made a point of building ourselves from the very bottom without any outside help. It doesn't really make sense to me that we would then build the whole thing we've built over our own label." Besides, she adds, it's a dying system.

The band feels the same way about mainstream radio. "Music beings can find things for themselves and they don't want to be fed something," Himes says. "So if you want to continue to grow and the situation time, you have to acknowledge that people like bands that have come up from the ground, that are not afraid." Metric would like to see radio change with the times, especially in Canada, where it's all but guaranteed the success of former indie bands. In 2004, they spoke up at a gig sponsored by Toronto's radio station 102.1 The Edge, which hasn't been playing their music. "We started playing the chords from the Broken Way. The last time we played, we played 'And Emily started singing 'The Edge has no edge.' That led to a war of words, with Edge morning DJ's badmouthing the band and Himes making snarky comments at Toronto

**IMPERIAL** While other bands court industry types, Metric boldly made the music



gigs. In the end, Haines made a surprise visit to the station to deliver the news. New songs from the group's new album are in rotation.

While Metric's music is no stretch for The Edge, the station's change of heart could also have something to do with the lead singer's charm. She can really run it—whipping a crowd into a frenzy with her sassy, disarming stage presence. She's got another side too, which will be displayed on a solo and/or collaborative album, as he refused to negotiate. "I write more than it needed for Metric," she says. "Then also it will be very concise. I'm going to put together a pretty amazing show for the Toronto Symphony with adult orchestras. Otherwise, I don't think I'm going to cover it." This is just a side project and won't get in the way of Metric's momentum, which took the band years to achieve.

Haines was born in New Delhi and ended in Peterborough, Ont., the daughter of poet Paul Haines. She grew up in Toronto and studied trumpet in juvies. They met in a bar in Toronto in 1998 and bonded over a mutual dislike of what funk music—before meeting in Brooklyn to make music together. By 2003, they had gotten out of their first record deal, and met Scott Key and Winwood. During an Internet radio interview toward the end of touring in *Antennas*, they spoke up about the band's evolution. "Travis and I played a small show with a Danish bass player and it was so bad, I thought I should be shot for that," says Shaw. "Julian comes up after and says, 'I like your band.' And I said casually, 'Great, why don't you join us?' And he said, 'Okay.' Later that night someone told

POSTER CHILDREN: The songs are openly political, but there's plenty of glamour, too

day and we were driving across the border," says Haines. "As Bush won we were really happy to be back in Canada." (Scott-Key and Winwood picked Outland, Calif., for their home base.) The band on the new disc are more complex and satisfying, thanks in part to a recording arrangement that fits better with the band. "This time we did it in the cold Canadian winter," says Shaw, "and only recorded in the middle of the night, because the studio was over a bank that was operating 24/7." Shaw took over the production, pulling back a bit on the new wave synth and raising up the guitars. And Haines' songwriting benefited from two years on the road, getting to know the new band members.

Metric can be unapologetically political, and both albums are unequivocally anti-American. On the 2001 single, "Society," Haines sings, "All we do is talk, all we do is argue / As the domestic planet is torn / America's so corrupt." On the latest CD, there is "Monster Hospital" (I fought the war but the war won / I fought the war but the war won't stop for the love of god).

Most of the other new songs call against consumerism and address social and environmental issues—and there's a feminist take on celebrity. Can't stand by myself? Hate to sleep alone? *Surpriser always help / So I take somebody home / To find out how I feel / Feel like just a lady / Portrait of a lady / Painter of a girl.*

Haines seems to be both a symbol and poster girl. A serious songwriter and musician with a rock-influenced sensibility, she tries to bring her own kind of glamour to a sense of gritty, sexy-byways—convincing with a singer's friend who owns the singer's skin being oiled on the bus. Her band has given the world danceable rock music with a socially conscious message. But now, after years of hard work and despite their do-it-yourself ethic, seven lyrics and finely tuned musicianship, Metric may have to work at not appearing contented. And lightning upon the attitude. Along the way, at the Seattle's show was heard saying, "I'm off from now, it's like they've become the rock stars they always wanted to be." ■

**FOR PHOTO AND VIDEO GALLERIES** from the South by Southwest music festival, visit [www.southby.com](http://www.southby.com)

## THEY OPENED FOR THE ROLLING STONES BUT MAKE LIGHT OF IT. 'I HAVE [THE PHOTO] IN A VAULT SOMEWHERE,' SAYS HAINES

me I put me the best drummer in New York." Haines and Shaw boarded Scott-Key to find a house, and he eventually convinced a friend, Winwood, to switch from guitar to bass. The four relocated to Los Angeles. "We moved into the older son's house," says Haines. "Her name was Susan or, did I come in with a record, in a night, and he on loads." Scott-Key confirms, "Travis was pouring one of that night." "There were some in the house and they had no money, but they were in front, playing at the Silver Lake Lounge in front of 100 people until they finally got into a studio with producer Michael Andrews.

"We would be there at 10 a.m.," says Shaw. "You can't make a rock album at 10 a.m. in the California sun." Somehow they managed. That disc, *Old World* (underground), *When Are You Next*, and also one of the best dance tracks ever recorded, *Dead Disco*, and three years later is still selling well.

For the new album, Travis had they moved back to Toronto. "It happened so quickly

### KENNY ROGERS...HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

I was so young, so was she / Life didn't stop a mystery for very long / We would sit so wrong / Then she walked, told she was late / So we took a little drive together / And each one of them, took and took care of that / But now I'm looking back on some of my decisions / Now that it's much too late to change / How a father could have told her not / If I could undo what's been done—New Yorker & Chicago, the 1986 track (written by Craig McCreary and Tim Mitchell) on Rogers' new CD.



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THE PROBLEM is HBO doesn't have any new shows that get the kind of attention *The Sopranos* (now in its last season) has always had

## Is it time to declare HBOver?

It used to be the only place to go for daring unconventional shows. Not anymore.

**BY JIMME A. WEISBERG** • *The Sopranos* recently began its sixth and final season on the HBO network (the episodes are carried in Canada by The Movie Network). TV critics cheered, and audiences agreed over who got shot when and what was up with that dream sequence. But all the media and audience excitement masked up one problem: HBO doesn't have any new shows that get that kind of attention. And when *The Sopranos* is gone, they may not have any at all.

When it comes to original programming, HBO has never regained the high of 2004, the year the network won 32 Emmys for shows like *The Sopranos* and *Crash* Star Line. And since then, HBO's audience has declined, most of its hit shows are fading, and its best shows have not taken off, with the possible exception of the inside-Hollywood comedy *Entourage*. *Deadwood*, a revisionist western, is repeated but not big-screen phenomenon to match *The Sopranos*. *Big Love*, about a man with three wives, inspired jokes about how a made-for-TV guy looks boring. Many of HBO's other recent shows have been ambitious failures like *Crash*, a sort of dark board version of *Twist Peaks*.

What most of these duds have was what HBO founder Chas Albritton sought to bring to his shows: a sense of elegance to "regulate" network shows. In developing original programming, Albritton took advantage of pay-TV viewers' neither interference from advertisers or censors, he could try unusual things. By inverting the usual TV rules, HBO came into its own with shows like *The Sopranos*, *Sex and the City*, and *The Larry Sanders Show*. Instead of likable heroes, HBO presented screw-up protagonists, instead of traditional story lines, HBO churned out shows with less predictable and bleak endings.

The rule-breaking wasn't just to please the critics, there was business sense in setting HBO

shows apart—as in the network's slogan, "It's not TV, it's HBO." Writer Larry Brody, who produced the short-lived HBO animated series *Spurs*, described the rationale behind the formula: "[Albritton] wanted the slowest content because they would be in such sharp contrast to network fare and therefore have an impact on critics. He wanted the 'backwards' storytelling because...the hope was that the more difficult a show was to understand the more times a viewer would watch and try to figure everything out."

But this formula only works if the shows really are different from other TV. Recently,

**Lost has the kind of deliberately confusing storylines HBO pioneered. But *Lost* is on ABC/Disney.**

other networks, inspired by the success of HBO, have adopted Albritton's formula and made it conventional. The *Shield*, a brutal and unusual cop show, is exactly the sort of dark drama HBO was known for—until it produced by Fox's FX Network. The remake of *Gunther* Galactica has the things the HBO has had: rape scenes, a loyal fan base, discussions of social significance. But it's produced for the Sci Fi Channel. Even the home of *Star Trek* reruns is minding an old HBO.

Broadcast networks have also produced their own HBO-esque shows. With the fragmentation of the TV audience into various

niche markets, networks are free to make shows that appeal to the young, affluent viewers who make up HBO's core audience. ABC/Disney's *Lost* has the kind of deliberately confusing storylines that keep audiences debating what happened last week, while *Iron Man* takes darkness and brutality to the next level, via between commercial breaks.

All this means HBO is no longer the only place to go for a daring, unconventional show, and may actually be losing that battle to other networks and production companies. *Arrested Development*, which has the kind of sub-folklore and critical acclaim HBO's best shows had, spent two seasons on the Fox network, and is now reportedly moving to cable—but to HBO's competitor, the CBS-owned Showtime network. One episode of *Arrested Development* even made a point about the fact that HBO wouldn't want the show.

HBO still has enough subscribers to keep it profitable, but to stay afloat, Albritton will need to adjust to the fact that his formula is now mainstream, and find other ways to set HBO apart. One tactic may be to revive genres that other networks have abandoned. David Semel revived the western, and *Larry Limer*, premiering this year, will be a throwback to hard-edged documentaries like *Lawman*. Another network make a splash by doing things HBO used to do, HBO is responding by doing things its competitors used to do. With the departure of its flagship show, *The Sopranos*, however, that may not be enough. ■

### THE IRAQ WAR... ACCORDING TO TV

"The Iraq war breaks into its fourth year, it's a serious quest."  
—Jim Stewart

"This is also a long break in Iraq. It's just like here, half the people are getting bored, the other half are getting scared."  
—Jay Leno

"I think now the only way to get rid of the Iraq war is to put it on HBO."  
—David Letterman



## "I'm not getting any younger."

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SPOT CHECK: A Ugandan boy (Mekhi Phifer) awakes a woman (Thandie Newton) as the car they're in is hit by a truck. Scene from an awards show

## The collateral damage of Crash

When the L.A. drama beat out *Brokeback Mountain*, the big screen just got smaller

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON

It's finally settling down, the *Brokeback* backlash against *Crash*'s winning best picture at the Academy Awards. But what was it all about? It's hard to remember the Oscar vote that has produced such bitter animosity. Anne K. Purdie, who wrote the screenplay which *Brokeback Mountain* is based, revealed that the Oscar went to *Crash*. David Greenberg—refuted that & how Canadian Paul Haggis had stolen his own *Crash* title, and robbed a nomination from *A History of Violence*—called the Academy decision "outraged." The Academy is famous for stupidity. This, after all, is the group that preferred *Rocky to Star 80* and *Forever Gaze to Italy Fiction*. But its last act decision wasn't anything that makes it a disaster scene over smart drama.

Everyone has been quick to point out that these cameras have been at the Academy show a safe space about racism over a daring homosexual romance. Gay rights activists cried foul. And once Roger Ebert, who believed *Crash* actually was the best picture of 2005, seemed to defend himself against charges of homophobia. Others pointed out that Hollywood, as a paradoxical industry, chose a movie shot in Los Angeles over a runaway production filmed in Alabama. It was that *Crash*, as a self portrait of Los Angeles, appeals to Hollywood romantics. The pivotal scene—a bigoted white cop mistaking a Black woman in front of her husband—occurs in the temple of driving home from an awards ceremony.

But remember what motivated the choice, in movie that a big consequence has nothing to do with cinema or Hollywood. In selecting *Crash* over *Brokeback*, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has voted against its own interest by ignoring the science of television over the art of cinema. *Crash* is a pretty good movie, well acted and well shot, but it feels like it belongs on TV.

And that's how most of the Oscar voters would have seen it. Shortly before the ballot deadline, *Los Angeles Times* announced that *Crash* DVD is sold at the Academy's members—some 6,000. Many would have also seen *Brokeback* on DVD, and—missing the detail of the big screen—found it strangely close.

*Crash* was made by a man who's experienced his career writing for the small screen. And Haggis lends it the high camera, episodic style of series drama. Much of it is shot in TV style close-ups or medium shots. The telegraphic dialogue tells us exactly how the characters feel, and what we should think of them.

**In giving the Oscar to a film that's more at home on TV, Hollywood voted against its own interests**

*Brokeback Mountain* is a slow, subtle movie full of open space and unspoken silence. Its characters don't say much, and when they do say a film not what they mean.

Ebert: This is a one shot thing we got you.

on line

Jack: It's nobody's business but ours.

Ebert: Now leave I don't care.

Jack: My mother.

Compare that tiny exchange to this stretch of clucking collection from *Crash*, the black cop played by Don Cheadle in *Crash*:

In L.A., nobody travels just. We're always behind this serial and glass. I think we are

that look as much, that we could see each other, just so we can feel something.

If that sounds more like a screentest than a script, it's because Haggis likes to use his characters to tell a story about racism in Hollywood. This movie is an explicit trail of racial stereotypes—white, black, Hispanic, Iranian, Korean—which all explode with some tension. The message might lead and clear racial intolerance is a two-way street of road rage, an accident waiting to happen, and if we could only see just the displaced anger so we have our common hopes and fears, we'd had them not much separating us.

*Brokeback* may have become the best of both worlds when that gay cowboy picture, but no one could mistake it for a teenage movie. It's a coming-of-age, not a love. And what's the tragedy about this film is not that it's actually too open, but that it's too honestly old-fashioned. In a movie where that shows on face and speed effects, *Brokeback Mountain* is an oasis of calm. It reminds us that the big screen should be a place to get lost in, not a wall of unrelenting drama.

Watching a movie with an audience in the dark is fundamentally different than viewing it on TV. Cinema holds us hostage. It requires us to remain in the screen, to "go under," and usually it's a dramatic experience. TV lets us keep our distance. While it fights for our attention, the medium is in our control—usually under our thumb. We're always conscious of the room beyond the frame, and it's

## Erin Davis & Mike Cooper in the morning.

98.1CHFI  
Toronto's Late Pleasures



### WHO WE'RE STALKING... DANIEL CRAIG

The beleaguered "Bond Bond" received a boost last week when producer Barbara Broccoli renewed his 007 movie contract. Craig, who's been the subject of bad press and an internet boycott since the filming of *Casino Royale*, has actually proved a publicity dream, sparking lively discussions around the 44-year-old's suave, both his purported feelings as well as his Bond film. One of the latest is that he'll appear fully nude.







WASABI-FLAVORED POINTS LEFTS are being served in Toronto and Vancouver. Wasabi-flavoring has even infiltrated the beer market.

## Wasabi doesn't get any hotter than this

The condiment's sudden star turn owes more to its cultural significance than its taste

BY AMIE KINGSTON • Wasabi, that scorching green served with sushi, has finally emerged into the air, the latest flavoring of big man food. In just one year, Tobler's President's Choice label introduced "Japanese Wasabi & Honey" rice and corn chips. Last month, Pilsa Lay Canada rolled out wasabi-flavored potato chips in Toronto and Vancouver a month before deciding whether to go national. Wasabi-flavoring has even infiltrated the beer market, with Carlsberg's 1994 launch of a wasabi beer cider in Sweden.

Expect the wasabi onslaught to continue in January, Mizumi International, a Chicago-based firm that provides its wasabi trend analysis, pronounced wasabi the top seasoning word by "five digit" restaurants, which in turn reflected the evaluation of the American palate. It also reports the number of new wasabi-flavored products rose nearly three-fold in the U.S. alone (2005–2006) from 101 to 150.

Wasabi's resurgence as a bona fide flavoring, it should be noted, has less to do with its physiological heatness than its cultural heat. In some food is a cultural product, observed Ted Leary, a professor of anthropology and Japanese studies at Harvard University who is an authority on the globalization of food. Leary links the misrepresentation of sushi—and by extension wasabi—to the cucumber stars awarded Japan following that country's rise to an economic superpower in the 1980s, a time that the super-Daigaku City has dubbed "Japan's Great National Cool."

Enter now Japan holds the "most forward nation status," and has placed itself in the 19th century. Here the growing acceptance of Western culture, as evidenced by the popularity of tea including wasabi peas as a hot snack. Or the embrace of wasabi-flavoring on such high-end and cheap staples as wasabi-infused mashed potatoes and mayonnaise. And, finally, the scrambling by stock food

makers like Pilsa Lay in search of new Asian flavors. [The company scored green tea, cucumber and wasabi before launching wasabi.] Paul Uchi, who heads product development for Lullaby, says mass-market flavor trends show up first in snack food. "Inexpensive the fashion element because people are always looking for something different," he says.

There's only one crink in wasabi's ascendancy in the new flavor sensation, however: it's faux. The taste most people associate with wasabi is not that of the Japanese herb *Wasabia japonica*, but rather a smorgasbord of horseradish.

### Glimmers of wasabi snobbery are surfacing. Better sushi restaurants keep the real stuff in back.

powder, mustard powder, cornstarch and artificial food coloring. When ground, some wasabi root like horseradish, yields a light green creamy paste that has a numbing, fragrant, peppery flavor. The wasabi most desired for culinary use is grown on the banks of mountain streams in flooded terraces. It's difficult to cultivate and costly to place the price of a medium carrot can run up to \$100.

The mass-market acceptance of faux wasabi means the quest of the real stuff is destined to be long. Douglas Lamberti, the CEO of Real Wasabi in Hilton Head Island, S.C., says people are willing to pay a premium for

"authenticity." He sells fresh wasabi to upscale fusion restaurants and is augmenting its talk through the national food competition to help foods in some regions of the U.S.

In food circles, glimmers of wasabi snobbery are surfacing, with discussion of the various grades of dried wasabi powders, which vary dramatically in price. There's talk of sushi chefs smuggling the rhizome into the country. Lamberti speaks of people taking real wasabi powder to Japanese restaurants and mixing it with water themselves. Toronto-based culinary expert Donna Stern reports better sushi restaurants keep the real stuff in the back, you just have to ask for it.

Further abetting the status of real wasabi is the rise of fooding properties—its digital use, food discovery, online shopping. Although dedicated digital term haven't been born, wasabi is increasingly showing up in material supply menus.

The business prospects for wasabi, both faux and real, are ripe. Profile Coast Wasabi in Vancouver is cultivating the herb in greenhouses with the hope of exporting the technology to Japan. If it does, they'll take the company public, making it the world's first wasabi IPO. "It won't do it, it'll be the most exclusive Holy Grail," says director Steve Archer. "If we can, it'll become every man's commodity." That would make wasabi as common as ice cream, and would make restaurant all again in search of the next culturally fashionable flavor. ■



**TODAY'S SPECIAL... WHITE WEDDING CRANFISH**  
Cranfish, those fat-tailed cranberry coddles, are popular at weddings. Now, Canadian wedding planners have come up with a twist: white cranberry caviar. Apart from a more elite, traditional look to the table, the planners say white cranberries have a practical side. With cranberries helping a frequent caterer at weddings, the venue not only makes much of an elegant white caviar, but the bride gets a head start on the wedding cake.



DENIM GEORGE Vancouver's Jason Denim and his hand-painted Friday jeans, the latest in a well-worn pair to live with it all around and aging.

## Everybody out of the jean pool

This one-of-a-kind design may be a sign that the denim bubble is about to burst

BY JENNIFER GEORGE • This spring, Jason Denim, the 36-year-old founder of Friday—a Vancouver-based premium denim brand—foundered among Hollywood myths and their stories—decided to showcase his company's unique craftsmanship involving his pair of hand-drawn, hand-painted jeans to the Canadian and U.S. markets. Sold on a first-come, first-served basis, every single pair was spoken for before the material was even cut. (Sharon Stone and Scarlett Johansson each spoke for one.) The one of a kind designs, Denim says, "are a whole lot of taking a critical interpretation of whatever's going on. It's raw and fun—denim art, really." Each pair, which sells for \$250—a shockingly reasonable price in the high-fashion world of basic denim—takes 10 hours to paint and is considered to be the owner's own signature on the company's website, much as one would an original Warhol print or a rare Picasso figure.

Denim, though, shares the metaphor of a first wave. To say that all denim is the same, he says, is like saying all pretzels are the same. "There are thousands of denims made in different ways all over the world," he says. "They're made using different techniques, different washes, different cuts from America or Denmark." It's extremely complex. It was the world's first denim with the right texture and finish—and didn't get lost among the countless other jeans.

The perfection of limited edition jeans would seem to set the denim bubble of the past few years to blow to bits. Flipped by competition, designers are increasingly desperate to distinguish their brand. "The hand-painted jeans is something a little different—and right now, hand-drawn is anything new to most men and women," says Denim, who launched Friday a year ago after selling his first second-hand denim brand, Dink, in 2004. Companies like Rock & Ro-

public and 7 For All Mankind are trying to keep the hype alive by creating edgy designs like Victoria "Punk" Beckham and Zine Force, respectively, to create limited runs. Even a Japanese brand, recently released a series of handmade denim photographed by designer and second denim master Shigeo Katozaki that will be upwashed in 2006 prices.

Five years ago, the premium denim market—which boasts superior fabrics, fit and finish—barely existed beyond a handful of brands that managed to win the attention of affluent fashionistas. Karl Lagerfeld, Marc by Marc and 7 For All Mankind, the latter of which is now a small boutique for "it" jeans, price alone is useful as a tool for keeping fashion out of reach.

### Every last pair was spoken for before the material was even cut. Scarlett Johansson spoke for one.

made a 1200 pair of jeans—highly stylish and durable style for the professional—second collection, that through the power of celebrity endorsement, it has been recognized as the most radical of commodities.

Personally, they're also the most common. According to Caran, Inc., a nonprofit U.S. trade association, there are now more than 100 premium denim brands competing for celebrity buy-ins and consequent mass adulation. The trade industry, worth over US\$500 million, is being drowned by its own success. "In the history of consumer goods," says Max Velazquez of The Image

play, a Toronto youth marketing firm, "there has never been a single product as emblematic as the idea of it want to be an individual, just like everyone else as a pair of jeans." Every "it" brand, however, promises the same thing: jeans that are different, different down, different down and bubble down. But, there is some variation, especially Swedish denim, "Swedish denim," "extreme sandblasting, exposed zippers and strategically placed rips. But ultimately, a pair of premium jeans and a shiny top has become the uniform of our times—and when everybody is willing to pay a small fortune for "it" jeans, price alone is useful as a tool for keeping fashion out of reach.

The beauty of limited edition is that they counterbalance the notion of alter exclusivity. A person's ability to secure an on-demand, limited edition pair of jeans is testament to the extent to which she's in the know, since trading them down requires showing and, in more cases, under construction.

To create his Friday limited editions, Denim decided off on his own. He first had about 20 years ago. As a young entrepreneur, he used to work down to Value Village, buy old pairs of denim, and spend hours decorating them with logos, faces and characters. Then he'd take them down to Balmain Street and find that people were willing to pay 10 times for them. "When somebody buys a pair of limited edition, it's special," he says. "That's why we like to know who has them—maybe we'll send them a dozen roses or something." ■



**WHAT THEY GOT FOR IT: DIZIE CHOPPER XTREME**  
Denim's new line of jeans is called Dizie Chopper Xtreme. With its 100-ounce, 17% weight, it's the heaviest denim ever made. It's made in 25 lbs. With its new herringbone ribbed waist and up to 150-oz. cut, it can move a football field's worth of goods in just 10 minutes, or a trucking 100 hours in a day. Designed by a former shipwreck crew, the Xtreme will set you back US\$1,000.





## SIR HUMPHREY APPLEBY

1988-2006

The 10 Downing Street cat came back twice.  
But when Cherie Blair arrived, he was a goner.

**S**ir Humphrey Appleby, a.k.a. PC Third Cat, was born in London, England, in October 1988. Nothing is known about his parents, age, his siblings or any benefactors he may have had during his first year of life. In October 1989, the black and white long-haired stray, or "moggie" in British parlance, walked up to the black front door of 10 Downing Street, the usual scene of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Says Cabinet Office spokesman Steve Coomber, "This area is in the heart of Westminster. It is not a residential area. It is not an area where there are lots of cars speeding around, so we don't know where he came from." His life was adopted by an accessories dealer at the adjoining Cabinet Office at 20 Whitehall Road, who kept him at home for a few days and then brought him to the office after seeking permission from the deputy establishment officer to have cats. There was no shortage of guardians. Although accounts vary (the Cabinet Office records are "patchy"), there had been a cat in the government buildings on and off, since the time of Henry VIII.

Humphrey, who was mild-mannered, bureaucratic and not particularly fond of his name after 120 members of the Cabinet Office staff, including prime minister Thatcher's private secretary Robin Butler, organized a ballot. His nickname was the English television character Sir Humphrey Appleby, civil servant in *Yes, Minister*. The name was chosen in spite of the fact it gave only five votes. Still, as often happens with strays, once he was named, "Humphrey" was well loved," says Coomber.

Classified information released last week by the Cabinet Office reveals that Humphrey was rescued by the cat who was four years old and "regularly dogged." He did not drop in the prime minister's residence, but rather inside the Secretaries of State and Deputy Prime Minister offices, and on a chair in the magazine area at 20 Whitehall. He also wandered deep on the floor during cabinet meetings, but Coomber would not confirm if Mrs. Thatcher was present at the same time. Neither would he say if Humphrey ever met the Queen.

Security guards fed Humphrey five times a day. His favorite food was Whiskas. "When he recently got left with only another head," reads the government dossier, "he went for several days without eating." He was an outdoor cat with a wide-ranging territory who sometimes covered with the dachshund, pinto and squirrel in meet by St. James's Park. He served as a subject of various newspaper stories. "We're happy about animals in England," explains George Jones, political editor of the Daily Telegraph. "He became a favorite cat."

Humphrey received offers of adoption and fan mail from around the world. In his honor, Ted Hughes wrote *The Odyssey of Humphrey*, a mock-epic poem in the style of Virgil's *Aeneid*, in *Experiments*, and

sent it to 10 Downing in the hope that "it may cause a bit of pleasure and amusement." The Cabinet Office sent a thank-you note.

After Margaret Thatcher's 10 Downing on Nov. 22, 1990, her successor John Major regarded Humphrey fondly, albeit not fondly enough to take him into residence. In June 1994, Humphrey lost his status, briefly, as a result of a story written by James Storer in the *Telegraph* that Humphrey was the culprit. "The painted moggie," Storer says, "Other papers called him a killer."

In early June 1995, Humphrey went missing. He was suffering from a kidney infection and was presumed dead. But, despite his arrival at 10 Downing, Humphrey traveled about a mile away to a Ministry of Defence policeman on duty outside the Royal Army Medical College. The policeman adopted him and named him PC Patrol Cat. They took him to a vet who prescribed a special low-protein diet for his kidney problems. His cat. Humphrey's new life only lasted about three months in all the papers, as warning that he had died, published stories. His new owners said his parents took Humphrey home. In a headline, Humphrey was quoted as saying, "I have had a wonderful holiday...but it is time to be back and I am looking forward to the new parliamentary season."

What he did not anticipate was the arrival of Cherie Blair, a prime minister's wife who would not tolerate him, inside or out. "No," says Jones, "he didn't want the cat." The post-royal Blair had had Humphrey put down when he was dogged on July 1997, two months after her husband took office. But it turned out that Humphrey had been adopted by a travel agent and Hansi Volder, who lived near St. James's Park. Humphrey was reportedly a friend of the woman's and again taken back to 10 Downing, but not for long.

To speak to rumors that she despised the cat, Cherie Blair posed for photographers clutching him in her arms. Behind the scenes, plans were made for his original benefactor, the guard who first had eyes on him in 1989, to take him home once and for all. "He had a life away from here," explains Steve Coomber. "He was losing weight." Humphrey's final disappearance from 10 Downing caused an uproar in Parliament, with one member warning Tony Blair of disaster. To prove Humphrey was alive, a photographer was dispatched to take his picture sitting on newspapers with the date clearly visible.

On March 20, a spokesman for the British Prime Minister announced, "Humphrey sadly died last week some time." He was 17.

BY KARRARA HORTON



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